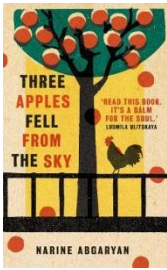


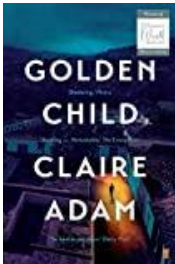
***+Oxfordshire County Council Reading Groups Collection
Multiple-Copy Titles Available for Loan
Master list revised November 2024**

Narine ABGARYAN Three Apples Fell from the Sky (2021, 258 pages)



In a remote village high in the Armenian mountains, a close-knit community bicker, gossip and laugh. Their only connection with the outside world is an ancient telegraph wire and a perilous mountain road that even cows struggle to navigate. As they go about their daily lives - harvesting crops, making baklava, tidying their houses - the villagers are sustained by one thing: their belief in magic. But when 58-year old Anatolia becomes pregnant, it looks like the fortunes of this isolated village are about to change.

Claire ADAM Golden child (2019, 252 pages)



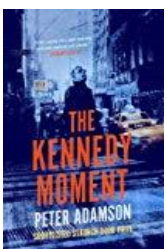
A boy has not returned home and a family anxiously awaits. A father steps out into the night to search for his son. As the hours turn into days, this man will learn many things. He will learn about being a father to twin boys who are in no way alike. He will learn how dangerous hopes and dreams can be. He will learn truths about Trinidad, about his family, and himself. He will question received wisdom and question his judgement. He will learn about sacrifice and the nature of love - and he will be forced to act. *Winner of the Desmond Elliott prize*

Sara Nisha ADAMS The Reading List (2021, 432 pages)



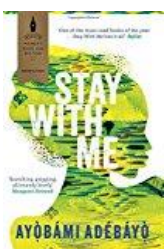
Mukesh lives a quiet life after the loss of his wife Naina. He worries about his granddaughter, Priya, who tucks herself away reading. Aleisha is working at the local library when she discovers a piece of paper in the back of 'To Kill A Mockingbird' with a list of books that she's never heard of before. In turn, each story transports Aleisha away from the painful realities she's facing at home. When Mukesh arrives at the library, desperate to forge a connection with his granddaughter, Aleisha discovers that the reading list will be a lifeline for him too.

Peter ADAMSON The Kennedy moment (2018, 384 pages)



Dr Michael Lowell is intrigued by Stephen Walsh's invitation to a reunion of Oxford college friends. At least he'll be able to catch up with cynical advertising genius Toby Jenks and frontline medic H el ene Hevr e. He expects a congenial weekend; instead they seed a conspiracy that could rock the foundations of the US government. Moving between Oxford, New York, Washington, Geneva and Abidjan, this is the story of five people possessed by an extraordinary idea.

Ayobami ADEBAYO Stay with me (2017, 298 pages)



Yejide is hoping for a miracle, for a child. It is all her husband wants, all her mother-in-law wants, and she has tried everything - arduous pilgrimages, medical consultations, dances with prophets, appeals to God. But when her in-laws insist upon a new wife, it is too much for Yejide to bear. Unravelling against the social and political turbulence of '80s Nigeria, Ayobami Adebayo weaves a devastating story of the fragility of married love, the undoing of family, the wretchedness of grief and the all-consuming bonds of motherhood. *Shortlisted for the Women's Prize 2017, and the Wellcome Prize 2018.*

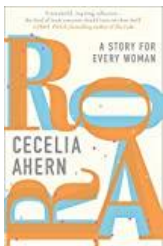
Chimamanda ADICHIE Purple Hibiscus (2003, 307 pages)

A haunting tale of an Africa and an adolescence undergoing tremendous changes. The limits of fifteen-year-old Kambili's world are defined by the high walls of her family estate and the dictates of her repressive and fanatically religious father. Her life is regulated by schedules: prayer, sleep, study, and more prayer. When Nigeria begins to fall apart during a military coup, Kambili's father, involved mysteriously in the political crisis, sends Kambili and her brother away to live with their aunt. In this house, full of energy and laughter, she discovers life and love – and a terrible, bruising secret deep within her family.

Chimamanda ADICHIE Americanah (2014, 400 pages)

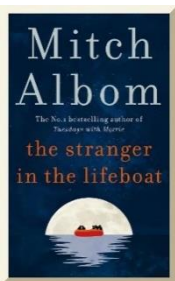
A story of love and race centred around a young woman and man from Nigeria who face difficult choices and challenges in the countries they come to call home. Ifemelu - beautiful, self-assured - departs for America to study, and achieves success as a writer of an eye-opening blog about race in America. Obinze - the quiet, thoughtful son of a professor – grows to be a wealthy man in a newly democratic Nigeria. But when Ifemelu returns to Nigeria, and she and Obinze reignite their shared passion - for their homeland and for each other - they will face the toughest decisions of their lives.

Cecelia AHERN Roar (Short stories) (2018, 357 pages)



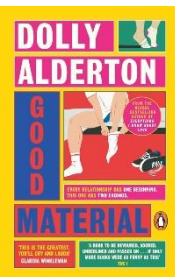
With her trademark honesty, Cecelia Ahern gives us 30 stories, all titled 'The Woman Who-', that capture the different facets of women's lives. The stories capture the moments the characters are overwhelmed by guilt, confusion, frustration, intimidation, exhaustion - the private moments when they feel the need to roar.

Mitch ALBOM – The Stranger in the Lifeboat (2021, 273 pages)



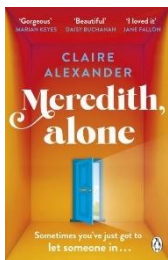
Adrift in a raft after a terrible shipwreck, ten strangers struggle to survive while they wait for rescue. After three days, short on water, food and hope, they spot a man floating in the waves. They pull him on board - and the survivor claims he can save them. But should they put their trust in him? Will any of them see home again? And why did the ship really sink?

Dolly Alderton Good Material (2023, 425 pages)



Living out of a suitcase in his best friends' spare room, waiting for his career as a stand-up comedian to finally take off, Andy struggles to process the life-ruining end of his relationship with the only woman he's ever truly loved. As he tries to solve the mystery of his broken relationship, he contends with career catastrophe, social media paranoia, a rapidly dwindling friendship group and the growing suspicion that, at 35, he really should have figured this all out by now. Andy has a lot to learn, not least his ex-girlfriend's side of the story.

Claire ALEXANDER – Meredith Alone (2022, 361p)

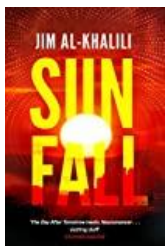


Meredith Maggs hasn't left her house in 1214 days. But she insists she isn't alone. She has her cat Fred. Her friend Sadie visits when she can. There's her online support group, StrengthInNumbers. She has her jigsaws, favourite recipes, her beloved Emily Dickinson, the internet, the Tesco delivery man and her treacherous memories for company. But something's about to change. Whether Meredith likes it or not, the world is coming to her door. Does she have the courage to overcome what's been keeping her inside all this time?

Monica ALI Brick Lane (2003, 491 pages)

Still in her teenage years, Nazneen finds herself in an arranged marriage with a disappointed man who is twenty years older. Away from the mud and heat of her Bangladeshi village, home is now a cramped flat in a high-rise block in London's East End. Nazneen is forced to depend on her husband, but unlike him she is practical and wise. She keeps in touch with her sister Hasina back in the village, but the rebellious Hasina has kicked against cultural tradition and run off in a 'love marriage' with the man of her dreams. When he suddenly turns violent, she is forced into the degrading job of garment girl in a cloth factory. Confined in her flat by tradition and family duty, Nazneen also sews furiously for a living until the radical Karim steps unexpectedly into her life. On a background of racial conflict and tension, they embark on a love affair that forces Nazneen finally to take control of her fate.

Jim AL-KHALILI Sunfall (2019, 441 pages)



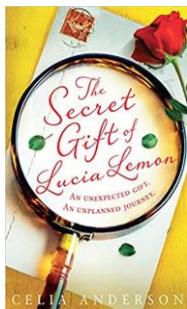
2041 and our planet seems to be turning against itself - it would appear that the magnetic field, that protects life on Earth from deadly radiation from space, is failing. World governments have concealed this rapidly emerging Armageddon. But a young Iranian hacktivist stumbles across the truth, and it becomes a race against time to reactivate the earth's core using beams of dark matter. As a small team of brave and brilliant scientists battle to find a way of transforming theory into practice, they face a fanatical group intent on pursuing their own endgame agenda and will do anything, commit any crime, to ensure that the

project fails . . .

Isabel ALLENDE House of the Spirits (1982, 490 pages)

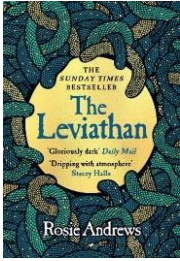
Spanning four generations, Isabel Allende's magnificent family saga is populated by a memorable, often eccentric cast of characters. Together, men and women, spirits, the forces of nature, and of history, converge in an unforgettable, wholly absorbing and brilliantly realised novel that is as richly entertaining as it is a masterpiece of modern literature. *(translated from Spanish)*

Celia ANDERSON The Secret Gift of Lucia Lemon (2021, 369 pages)



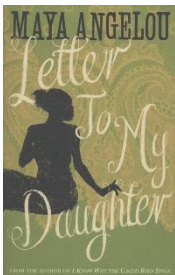
After fifty-eight years of playing it safe, Lucia Lemon wants something more from life. If only she knew what. Until she receives a package in the post from an old friend that will change her life forever. Inside, she finds a bundle of cash, a collection of old maps, and a beautiful compass that no longer points north. Holding the compass in her hand, Lucia suddenly feels hopeful – for the first time ever, life feels full of possibility and the open road is calling. If only she's brave enough to answer it...

Rosie ANDREWS The Leviathan (2022, 320 pages)



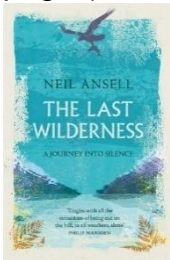
Norfolk, 1643. With civil war tearing England apart, reluctant soldier Thomas Treadwater is summoned home by his sister, who accuses a new servant of improper conduct with their widowed father. By the time Thomas returns home, his father is insensible, felled by a stroke, and their new servant is in prison, facing charges of witchcraft. As Thomas unravels the mystery of what has happened, he uncovers, not a tale of superstition, but something dark and ancient, linked to a shipwreck years before.

Maya ANGELOU Letter to my Daughter (2009, 179 pages) Non Fiction



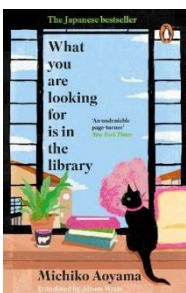
Dedicated to the daughter she never had but sees all around her, 'Letter to My Daughter' reveals Maya Angelou's path to living well and living a life with meaning.

Neil ANSELL The Last wilderness: a journey into silence (Non-Fiction) (2018, 312 pages)



The experience of being in nature alone is here set within the context of a series of walks that Neil Ansell takes into the most remote parts of Britain, the rough bounds in the Scottish Highlands. He illustrates the impact of being alone as part of nature, rather than outside it. As a counterpoint, Neil Ansell also writes of the changes in the landscape, and how his hearing loss affects his relationship with nature as the calls of the birds he knows so well become silent to him. *Shortlisted for the 2018 Wainwright Golden Beer Book Prize.*

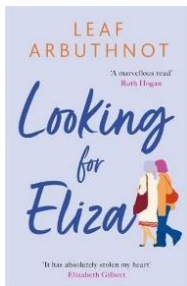
Michiko AOYAMA What you are looking for is in the library (2024, 250 pages)



Sayuri Komachi is no ordinary librarian. She has the unique ability to read the souls of anyone who walks through her door. Sensing exactly what they're looking for in life, she provides just the book recommendation they never knew they needed to help them find it. Every borrower in her library is at a different crossroads, from the restless retail assistant, the juggling mother and the meticulous accountant. The surprise book Komachi lends to each will have transformative consequences.

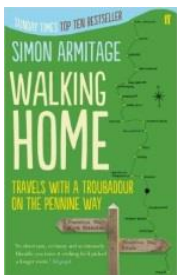
Leaf ARBUTHNOT

Looking for Eliza (2020, 368 pages)



A widow puts up adverts to 'Rent a Granny' in an attempt to reconnect with people but it's not until she finds Eliza, a student recently free of an abusive relationship, that she truly starts to feel less alone. Ada is a widowed writer, navigating loneliness in Oxford. She fears she is becoming peripheral, another invisible woman. Eliza is a student at the university. She finds it difficult to form meaningful relationships. Can they find what they are looking for in each other, and cast off their isolation for good?

Simon ARMITAGE **Walking home (Non-Fiction)** (2012, 250 pages)



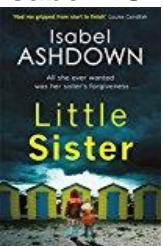
In summer 2010 Simon Armitage decided to walk the Pennine Way. Through beautiful and bleak terrain, across lonely fells and into the howling wind, he would be walking home, towards the Yorkshire village where he was born. Travelling as a 'modern troubadour' without a penny in his pocket, he stopped along the way to give poetry readings in village halls, churches, pubs and living rooms. "Walking Home" describes this extraordinary, yet ordinary, journey.

Isabel ASHDOWN **Flight** (2015, 320 pages)



When Wren Irving's numbers come up in the first ever national lottery draw, she doesn't tell her husband, Rob. Instead she quietly packs her bags, kisses her six-month-old daughter Phoebe goodbye, and leaves. Two decades later, Rob has moved on and found happiness with their oldest friend, Laura. Phoebe, now a young woman, has never known any other life. But when Rob receives a mysterious letter, the past comes back to haunt them all. With their cosy world thrown into turmoil, Laura sets out to track Wren down and discover the truth about why she walked out all those years ago.

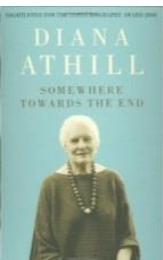
Isabel ASHDOWN **Little sister** (2017, 364 pages)



A missing child. A broken mother. A sister who doesn't remember a thing. After sixteen years apart sisters Jessica and Emily are reunited. With the past now behind them, the warmth they once shared quickly returns and before long Jess has moved into Emily's comfortable island home. Life couldn't be better. But when baby Daisy disappears while in Jess's care, the perfect life Emily has so carefully built starts to fall apart. Was Emily right to trust her sister after everything that happened before?

Diana ATHILL

Somewhere towards the end (Non-Fiction) (2009, 192 pages)

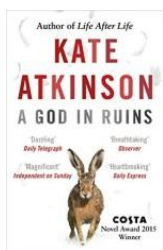


Diana Athill, born in 1917, made her reputation as a writer with the candour of her memoirs. In *Somewhere Towards the End* she reflects frankly on the losses and occasionally the gains that old age brings, and on the wisdom and fortitude required to face death. This is a lively narrative of events, lovers and friendships: the people and experiences that have taught her to regret very little, to resist despondency and to question the beliefs and customs of her own generation.

Kate ATKINSON **Life after Life** (2014, 640 pages)

During a snowstorm in England in 1910, a baby is born and dies before she can take her first breath. During a snowstorm in England in 1910, the same baby is born and lives to tell the tale. What if there *were* second chances? And third chances? In fact an infinite number of chances to live your life? Would you eventually be able to save the world from its own inevitable destiny? And would you even want to? *Life After Life* follows Ursula Todd as she lives through the turbulent events of the last century again and again.

Kate ATKINSON **A god in ruins** (2015, 556 pages)



This story relates the life of Teddy Todd – would-be poet, heroic World War II bomber pilot, husband, father, and grandfather – as he navigates the perils and progress of the 20th century. For all Teddy endures in battle, his greatest challenge will be to face living in a future he never expected to have.

This book looks at war and the effect it has, not only on those who live through it, but on the lives of the subsequent generations. If you have read *Life After Life* you will recognise Teddy as Ursula Todd's adored younger brother – but for those who have not read it, *A God in Ruins* stands fully on its own. *Winner of the 2015 Costa Novel Award*

Kate ATKINSON **Started Early, Took My Dog** (2010, 350 pages)

A day like any other for security chief Tracy Waterhouse, until she makes a shocking impulse purchase. That one moment of madness is all it takes for Tracy's humdrum world to be turned upside down, the tedium of everyday life replaced by fear and danger at every turn.

Helene ATTLEE **Lev's Violin – An Italian Adventure NF** (2021, 256 pages)

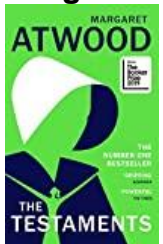


From the moment she hears Lev's violin for the first time, Helena Attlee is captivated. She is told that it is an Italian instrument, named after its former Russian owner. Eager to discover all she can about its ancestry, and the stories contained within its delicate wooden body, she sets out for its birthplace, Cremona, once the hometown of famous luthier Antonio Stradivari. This is the beginning of a beguiling journey whose end she could never have anticipated.

James ATTLEE **Isolarion: a different Oxford Journey (Non-Fiction)** (2008, 400 pages)

A thoughtful, streetwise, and personal account of his own pilgrimage to a place he thought he already knew - the Cowley Road in Oxford, right outside his door – *Isolarion* takes its title from a type of fifteenth-century map that isolates an area in order to present it in detail, and that's what Attlee, sharp-eyed and armed with tape recorder and notebook, provides for Cowley Road. The former site of a leper hospital, a workhouse, and a medieval well said to have miraculous healing powers, Cowley Road has little to do with the dreaming spires of the tourist's or student's Oxford.

Margaret ATWOOD **The Testaments** (2019, 435 pages)



When the van door slammed on Offred's future at the end of *The Handmaid's Tale*, readers had no way of telling what lay ahead for her--freedom, prison or death.

With *The Testaments*, the wait is over.

Margaret Atwood's sequel picks up the story more than fifteen years after Offred stepped into the unknown, with the explosive testaments of three female narrators from Gilead. *Joint Winner of the Booker Prize 2019*

Margaret ATWOOD Hag-seed: The Tempest retold (2016, 293 pages)

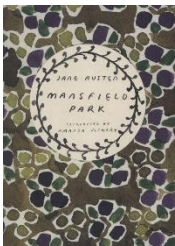


Felix is at the top of his game as Artistic Director of the Makeshiweg Theatre Festival. His productions have amazed and confounded. Now he's staging a *Tempest* like no other. It will boost his reputation. It will heal emotional wounds. Or that was the plan. Instead, after an act of unforeseen treachery, Felix is living in exile in a backwoods hovel, haunted by memories of his beloved lost daughter, Miranda and also brewing revenge. After twelve years, revenge finally arrives in the shape of a theatre course at a nearby prison. Here, Felix and his inmate actors will put on his *Tempest* and snare the traitors who destroyed him. It's magic! But will it remake Felix as his enemies fall? *Longlisted for the Baileys Women's Prize for fiction 2017; one of the series of Hogarth Shakespeare re-tellings.*

Margaret ATWOOD The Penelopiad (2005, 224 pages)

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Penelope – wife of Odysseus and cousin of the beautiful Helen of Troy – is portrayed as the quintessential faithful wife. Left alone for twenty years when Odysseus goes off to fight in the Trojan Wars, Penelope manages to maintain the kingdom of Ithaca, bring up her wayward son, and keep over a hundred suitors at bay. When Odysseus finally comes home after enduring hardships, overcoming monsters and sleeping with goddesses, he kills her suitors and – curiously – twelve of her maids. In a splendid contemporary twist to the ancient story, Margaret Atwood gives the story to Penelope and to her twelve hanged maids, asking: 'What led to the hanging of the maids, and what was Penelope really up to?'

Jane AUSTEN Mansfield Park ([1814] 2014, 560 pages)

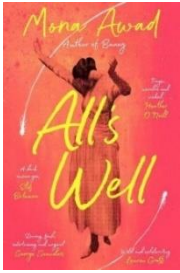


Adopted into the household of her uncle, Sir Thomas Bertram, Fanny Price grows up a meek outsider among her cousins in the unaccustomed elegance of Mansfield Park. Soon after Sir Thomas absents himself on estate business in Antigua (the family's investment in slavery and sugar is considered in the Introduction in a new, post-colonial light), Mary Crawford and her brother Henry arrive at Mansfield, bringing with them London glamour, and the seductive taste for flirtation and theatre that precipitates a crisis.

Jane AUSTEN Persuasion (1816, 400 pages)

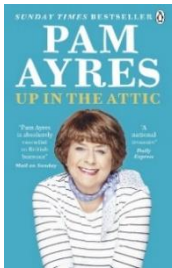
At twenty-seven, Anne Elliot is no longer young and has few romantic prospects. Eight years earlier, she had been persuaded by her friend Lady Russell to break off her engagement to Frederick Wentworth, a handsome naval captain with neither fortune nor rank. What happens when they encounter each other again is movingly told in Jane Austen's last completed novel. Set in the fashionable societies of Lyme Regis and Bath, *Persuasion* is a brilliant satire of vanity and pretension, but, above all, it is a love story tinged with the heartache of missed opportunities.

Mona AWAD – All's Well (2023, 368 pages)



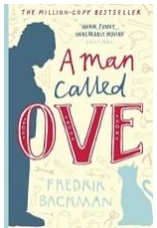
Miranda Fitch's life is a waking nightmare. The accident that ended her burgeoning acting career left her with excruciating, chronic back pain, a failed marriage, and a dependence on painkillers. And now she's on the verge of losing her job as a college theatre director. Determined to put on Shakespeare's 'All's Well That Ends Well', she faces a mutinous cast hellbent on staging 'Macbeth'. Miranda sees her chance at redemption slip through her fingers. That's when she meets three strange benefactors who have an eerie knowledge of Miranda's past and a tantalizing promise for her future.

Pam AYRES Up in the Attic (Non-Fiction) (2019, 132 pages)



A collection of verse from the nation's favourite poet, Pam Ayres. With the same magic that has enchanted her fans for more than four decades, Pam's new collection is by turns hilarious, reflective, and profound.

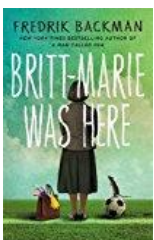
Fredrik BACKMAN A man called Ove (2014, 304 pages)



At first sight, Ove is almost certainly the grumpiest man you will ever meet. He thinks himself surrounded by idiots - neighbours who can't reverse a trailer properly, joggers, shop assistants who talk in code, and the perpetrators of the vicious coup d'etat that ousted him as Chairman of the Residents' Association. He will persist in making his daily inspection rounds of the local streets. But isn't it rare, these days, to find such old-fashioned clarity of belief and deed? Such unswerving conviction about what the world should be, and a lifelong

dedication to making it just so? In the end, you will see, there is something about Ove that is quite irresistible... *(translated from Swedish)*

Fredrik BACKMAN Britt-Marie was here (2016, 320 pages)



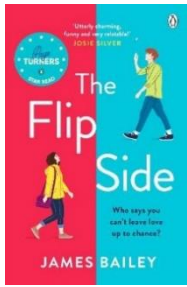
For as long as anyone can remember, Britt-Marie has been an acquired taste. It's not that she's judgmental or fussy or difficult - she just expects things to be done in a certain way. A cutlery drawer should be arranged in the right order, for example - forks, knives, then spoons. So when Britt-Marie finds herself unemployed, separated from her husband of 20 years, left to fend for herself in the miserable provincial backwater that is Borg and somehow tasked with running the local football team, she is a little unprepared. But she will learn that

life may have more to offer her than she's ever realised, and love might be found in the most unexpected of places. *(translated from Swedish) – Librarian Recommended*

Catherine BAILEY Black Diamonds (Non-Fiction) (2007, 568 pages)

Wentworth is in Yorkshire and was surrounded by 70 collieries employing tens of thousands of men. It is the finest and largest Georgian house in Britain and belonged to the Fitzwilliam family. It is England's forgotten palace which belonged to Britain's richest aristocrats. "Black Diamonds" tells the story of its demise: family feuds, forbidden love, class war, and a tragic and violent death played their part. But coal, one of the most emotive issues in twentieth century British politics, lies at its heart. This is the extraordinary story of how the fabric of English society shifted beyond recognition in fifty turbulent years in the twentieth century.

James BAILEY The Flip Side (2020, 368 pages)



When Josh proposes in a pod on the London Eye at New Years' Eve, he thinks it's perfect. Until she says no, and they have to spend the next 29 *excruciating* minutes alone together. Realising he can't trust his own judgment, Josh decides from now on he will make every decision through the flip of a coin. *Maybe the coin will change his life forever.* Maybe it will find him find the girl of his dreams. Unusual romance, written by a man and from a man's perspective

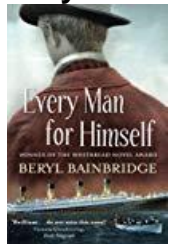
Beryl BAINBRIDGE An Awfully Big Adventure (1996, 208 pages)

It is 1950 and the Liverpool repertory theatre company is rehearsing its Christmas production of Peter Pan, a story of childhood innocence and loss. Stella has been taken on as assistant stage manager and quickly becomes obsessed with Meredith, the dissolute director. But it is only when the celebrated O'Hara arrives to take the lead that a different drama unfolds. In it, he and Stella are bound together in a past that neither dares to interpret.

Beryl BAINBRIDGE Bottle Factory Outing (1974, 208 pages)

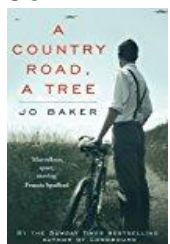
Freda and Brenda spend their days working in an Italian-run wine-bottling factory. A work outing offers promise for Freda and terror from Brenda; passions run high on that chilly day of freedom, and life after the outing never returns to normal. Beryl Bainbridge will dazzle readers in this offbeat, haunting yet hilarious novel.

Beryl BAINBRIDGE Every man for himself (1996, 214 pages)



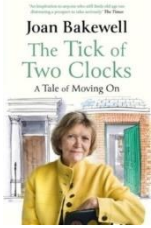
Recapturing the four crucial days prior to the sinking of the Titanic and the loss of fifteen hundred lives, this story is told from the perspective of Morgan, the American nephew of the owner of the shipping line, and reveals how his destiny is linked to other passengers.

Jo BAKER A country road, a tree (2016, 391 pages)



When war breaks out in Europe in 1939, a young, unknown writer journeys from his home in neutral Ireland to conflict-ridden Paris. With him we experience the hardships yet stubborn vibrancy at the heart of Europe during the Nazis' rise to power; his friendships with James Joyce and other luminaries; his devotion to the Frenchwoman who will become his lifelong companion; his secret work for the French Resistance and narrow escapes from the Gestapo; his flight from occupied Paris to the countryside; and the rubble of his life after liberation.

Joan BAKEWELL – *The Tick of Two Clocks* NF (2021, 173 pages)



When Joan Bakewell - Labour Peer, author and famous champion of the older people's right to a good and fruitful life - decided that she could no longer remain in her old home, she had to confront what she calls 'the next segment of life.' Disposing of things accumulated during a long life, saying goodbye to her home and the memories of more than fifty years, thinking about what is needed for downsizing - all suddenly became urgent and emotional tasks. Joan tells us a story of our times and how she is learning to live to the sound and tune of the tick of two clocks: the old and the new.

Ros BARBER *The Marlowe papers* (2013, 464 pages)

On May 30th, 1593, a celebrated young playwright was killed in a tavern brawl in London. That, at least, was the official version. Now Christopher Marlowe reveals the truth: that his 'death' was an elaborate ruse to avoid being convicted of heresy; that he was spirited across the Channel to live on in lonely exile; that he continued to write plays and poetry, hiding behind the name of a colourless man from Stratford - one William Shakespeare. With the grip of a thriller and the emotional force of a sonnet, this remarkable novel in verse gives voice to a man who was brilliant, passionate and mercurial. A cobbler's son who counted nobles among his friends, a spy in the Queen's service, a fickle lover and a declared religious sceptic, he was always courting trouble.

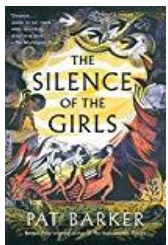
Muriel BARBERY *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* (2008, 320 pages)

An enchanting "New York Times" and international bestseller about life, art, literature, philosophy, culture, class, privilege, and power, seen through the eyes of a 54-year old French concierge and a precocious but troubled 12-year-old girl; a moving, funny, triumphant novel that exalts the quiet victories of the inconspicuous among us. (*translated from French*)

Pat BARKER *Regeneration* (2008, 256 pages)

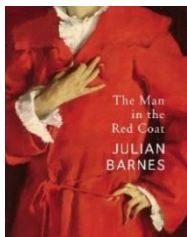
The book is set in Craiglockhart War Hospital, Scotland, 1917, and army psychiatrist William Rivers is treating shell-shocked soldiers. Under his care are the poets Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, as well as mute Billy Prior, who is only able to communicate by means of pencil and paper. Rivers' job is to make the men in his charge healthy enough to fight yet the closer he gets to mending his patients' minds the harder becomes every decision to send them back to the horrors of the front. Pat Barker's *Regeneration* is the classic exploration of how the traumas of war brutalised a generation of young men.

Pat BARKER *The Silence of the girls* (2018, 325 pages)



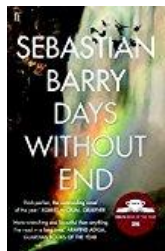
The great city of Troy is under siege as Greek heroes Achilles and Agamemnon wage bloody war over a stolen woman. In the Greek camp, another woman is watching and waiting: Briseis. She was a queen of this land until Achilles sacked her city and murdered her husband and sons. Now she is Achilles' concubine: a prize of battle. Briseis is just one among thousands of women backstage in this war - the slaves and prostitutes, the nurses, the women who lay out the dead - all of them voiceless in history. But, though no one knows it yet, they are just 10 weeks away from the death of Achilles and the fall of Troy, an end to this long and bitter conflict. Briseis will see it all - and she will bear witness. *Shortlisted for the Costa Best Novel Award 2018 and the Women's Prize for Fiction 2019*

Julian BARNES The Man in the Red Coat (2019, 265p. NF)



In the summer of 1885, three Frenchmen arrived in London for a few days' shopping. One was a Prince, one was a Count, and the third was a commoner with an Italian name, who four years earlier had been the subject of one of John Singer Sargent's greatest portraits. The three men's lives play out against the backdrop of the Belle Epoque in Paris. The beautiful age of glamour and pleasure more often showed its ugly side, with more parallels to our own age than we might imagine.

Sebastian BARRY Days without end (2016, 320 pages)



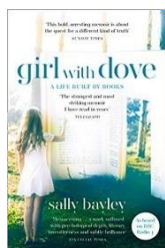
Thomas McNulty, aged barely seventeen and having fled the Great Famine in Ireland, signs up for the U.S. Army in the 1850s. With his brother in arms, John Cole, Thomas goes on to fight in the Indian Wars—against the Sioux and the Yurok—and, ultimately, the Civil War. Orphans of terrible hardships themselves, the men find these days to be vivid and alive, despite the horrors they see and are complicit in. Moving from the plains of Wyoming to Tennessee, Sebastian Barry's latest work is an intensely poignant story of two men and the makeshift family they create with a young Sioux girl, Winona. A fresh and haunting portrait of the most fateful years in American history. *Winner of the 2016 Costa Book of the Year.*

H E BATES The Darling Buds of May (1958, 136 pages)



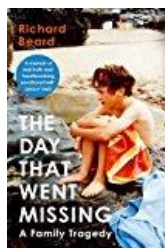
The Larkins return from an outing for fish and chips and ice cream one May evening. There, amid the rustic charms of home, they discover a visitor: one Cedric Charlton, Her Majesty's inspector of taxes. Mr Charlton is visiting to find out why junk-dealer Pop hasn't paid his tax, but nothing's that simple with the Larkins.

Sally BAYLEY Girl with dove: a life built by books (Non-Fiction) (2018, 270 pages)



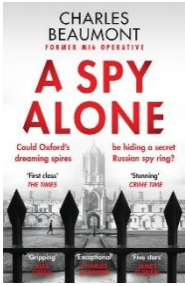
Weaving literary classics with a young girl's coming of age story, this is a book that testifies to the transformative power of reading and the literary imagination. Mixing fairy tale, literary classics, nursery rhymes and folklore, it is the story of a child's adventure in wonderland and search for truth in an adult world often cast in deep shadow.

Richard BEARD The Day that went missing: a family tragedy (Non-Fiction) (2017, 278 pages)



On a family holiday in Cornwall in 1978, Richard and Nicholas are in the sea, jumping the waves. Suddenly and inexplicably Nicholas is out of his depth and then, shockingly, so is Richard. Only one of the brothers returns to the shore. Richard does not attend Nicholas's funeral and afterwards the family return to Cornwall to continue the holiday. Soon they stop speaking of that day at the beach altogether. Years later, haunted by grief, Richard sets out to piece together the story. Who was Nicholas? What really happened that day? And why did the family never speak of it again?

Charles BEAUMONT A Spy Alone (2023, 327 pages)



Former spy Simon Sharman is eking out a living in the private sector. When a commission to delve into the financial dealings of a mysterious Russian oligarch comes across his desk, he jumps at the chance. But as Simon investigates, worrying patterns begin to emerge. His subject made regular trips to Oxford, but for no apparent reason. Has he found what none of his former colleagues believed possible, a Russian spy ring now nestled at the heart of the British Establishment? Or is he just another paranoid ex-spook left out in the cold, obsessed with redemption?

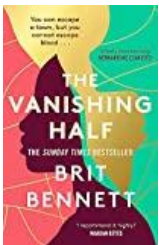
Alan BENNETT A Life Like Other People's (Biography) (2009, 256 pages)

A poignant family memoir offering a portrait of his parents' marriage and recalling his Leeds childhood, Christmases with Grandma Peel, and the lives, loves and deaths of his unforgettable aunties Kathleen and Myra. Bennett's powerful account of his mother's descent into depression and later dementia comes hand in hand with the uncovering of a long-held tragic secret. This is a heartrending and at times irresistibly funny work of autobiography by one of the best-loved English writers alive today.

Alan BENNETT The Uncommon Reader (2009, 128 pages)

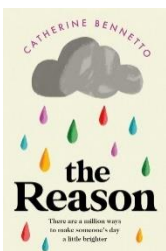
Features none other than HM the Queen who drifts accidentally into reading when her corgis stray into a mobile library parked at Buckingham Palace. Her reading naturally changes her world view and her relationship with people like the oleaginous prime minister and his repellent advisers. The consequence is surprising, mildly shocking and funny.

Brit BENNETT The Vanishing half (2020, 352 pages)



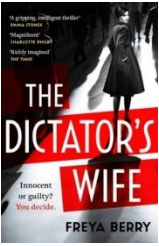
The Vignes twin sisters will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small, southern black community and running away at age sixteen, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different as adults, it's everything: their families, their communities, their racial identities. Ten years later, one sister lives with her black daughter in the same southern town she once tried to escape. The other secretly passes for white, and her white husband knows nothing of her past. Still, even separated by so many miles and just as many lies, the fates of the twins remain intertwined. *Longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction 2021*

Catherine BENNETTO The Reason (2022, 400 pages)



Brooke's life isn't going to plan. Her career as an events planner has stalled, her parents won't leave her alone and her daughter is desperately unhappy at school. But the reason for all this is no secret or mystery. Just under a year ago her husband died. Her husband's death, the worst thing that ever happened to her, has made her unbelievably rich. Despite how low she feels she suddenly has the power to make her daughter's life and the rest of the world a little brighter.

Freya BERRY The Dictator's Wife (2022, 416 pages)



London lawyer Laura flies to her parents' homeland for the most important defence case of her life. On trial is Marija Popa, widow of a murdered dictator, who created fear and division in his impoverished Eastern Bloc country. For Laura, the case is an opportunity to make sense of her broken childhood and her distant relationship with her mother, who will not speak about her old life under the regime. As Laura is led deeper into her investigation of the past, she realises that to uncover the truth, she must draw closer to the dictator's wife.

Adam BILES Beasts of England (2023, 288 pages)



Manor Farm has reinvented itself as the South of England's premium petting zoo. Humans and beasts alike are invited (for a small fee) to come and stroke, fondle, and take rides on the farm's inhabitants. But life is not a bed of roses for the animals, in spite of what their leaders may want them to believe.

Elections are rigged, the community is beset by factions, and sacred mottos are being constantly updated. The Farm is descending into chaos. What's more, a mysterious 'illness' has started ripping through the animals. Adam Biles honours, updates and subverts George Orwell's classic, channelling the

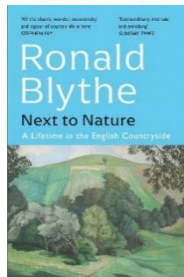
chaotic, fragmentary nature of populist politics in the Internet age into a savage farmyard satire.

A K BLAKEMORE The Manningtree Witches (2020, 295 pages)



England, 1643. The war between the Roundheads and the Cavaliers rages. Puritanical fervour has gripped the nation. In Manningtree, depleted of men since the wars began, the women are left to their own devices. At the margins of this diminished community are those who are barely tolerated by the affluent villagers - the old, the poor, the unmarried, the sharp-tongued. But then newcomer Matthew Hopkins, a mysterious, pious figure takes over The Thorn Inn and begins to ask questions about the women of the margins. Winner of the Desmond Elliott Prize.

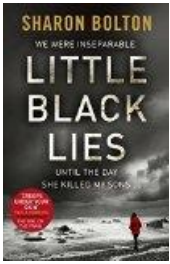
Ronald BLYTHE – Next to Nature (2023, 480 pages) NF



Ronald Blythe lives at the end of an overgrown farm track deep in the rolling countryside of the Stour Valley, on the border between Suffolk and Essex. His home is Bottengoms Farm, a sturdy yeoman's house once owned by the artist John Nash. From here, Blythe has spent almost half a century observing the slow turn of the agricultural year, the church year, and village life in a series of rich, lyrical rural diaries. Beginning with the arrival of snow on New Year's Day and ending with Christmas carols sung in the village church, 'Next to Nature' invites us to witness a simple life richly lived. With gentle wit and keen

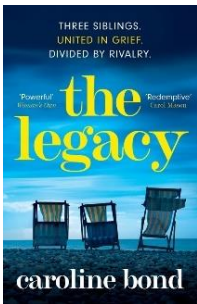
observation Blythe meditates on his life and faith, on literature, art and history, and on our place in the landscape.

S.J. BOLTON **Little black lies** (2015, 485 pages)



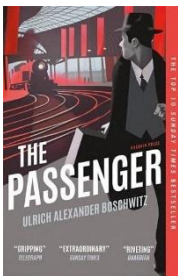
In such a small community as the Falkland Islands, a missing child is unheard of. In such a dangerous landscape it can only be a terrible tragedy, surely... When another child goes missing, and then a third, it's no longer possible to believe that their deaths were accidental, and the villagers must admit that there is a murderer among them. Even Catrin Quinn, a damaged woman living a reclusive life after the accidental deaths of her own two sons a few years ago, gets involved in the searches and the speculation. And suddenly, in this wild and beautiful place that generations have called home, no one feels safe.

Caroline BOND **The Legacy** (2021, 358 pages)



The deceased Jonathan Coulter planned for his death meticulously. His will states that his three adult children must decide between them how to dispose of his estate. If they cannot come together over their inheritance, then they risk losing it. But Liv, Noah and Chloe never agree on anything. Why has Jonathan left the decision to them? And why has he made no mention of his new partner, or the children's mother? If he wanted to teach them a lesson from beyond the grave, can the siblings put their differences aside long enough to learn it?

Ulrich BOSCHWITZ **The Passenger** (2021, 226 pages)



Germany, November 1938: Otto Silbermann receives a knock on his door and realises he must flee. A respected German-Jewish businessman, he has managed the brutality of the Nazi regime. As he and his wife plan to leave, all avenues are shut down and he is forced to abandon his home amid the untrammelled violence of Kristallnacht. With all the money he can gather stuffed into a suitcase, Otto takes train after train across Germany, desperately seeking to cross the border, every moment terrified a fellow passenger will discover his Jewish identity.

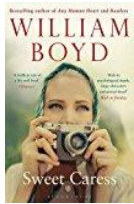
BOYD **Ordinary Thunderstorms** (2009, 234 pages)

What is the devastating effect on your life when, through no fault of your own, you lose everything - home, family, friends, job, reputation, passport, money, credit cards, mobile phone - and you can never get them back? This is what happens to a young man called Adam Kindred, one May evening in Chelsea, London, when a freakish series of malign accidents and a split-second decision turns his life upside down for ever. This is a heart-in-mouth conspiracy novel about the fragility of social identity, the scandal of big business, and the secrets that lie hidden in the filthy underbelly of every city.

William BOYD **Restless** (2006, 336 pages)

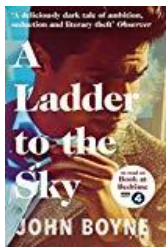
It is 1939. Eva Delectorskaya is a beautiful 28-year-old Russian emigree living in Paris. As war breaks out she is recruited for the British Secret Service by Lucas Romer, a mysterious Englishman, and under his tutelage she learns to become the perfect spy, to mask her emotions and trust no one, including those she loves most. Since the war, Eva has carefully rebuilt her life as a typically English wife and mother. But once a spy, always a spy. Now she must complete one final assignment, and this time Eva can't do it alone: she needs her daughter's help. *Restless* is full of suspense, emotion and history.

William BOYD **Sweet caress** (2015, 451 pages)



Amory Clay's first memory is of her father doing a handstand - but it is his absences that she chiefly remembers. Her Uncle Greville, a photographer, gives her both the affection she needs and a camera, which unleashes a passion that irrevocably shapes her future. She begins an apprenticeship with him in London, photographing socialites for magazines. But Amory is hungry for more and her search for life, love and artistic expression will take her to the demi-monde of 1920s Berlin, New York in the 1930s, the Blackshirt riots in London, and France during the Second World War. In this enthralling story of a life fully lived, William Boyd has created a sweeping panorama of the twentieth century, told through the camera lens of one unforgettable woman. *A Richard and Judy Summer 2016 choice.*

John BOYNE **A ladder to the sky** (2018, 433 pages)



A psychological drama of cat and mouse, 'A Ladder to the Sky' shows how easy it is to achieve the world if you are prepared to sacrifice your soul. If you look hard enough, you can find stories pretty much anywhere. They don't even have to be your own. Or so would-be writer Maurice Swift decides very early on in his career. A chance encounter in a Berlin hotel with celebrated novelist Erich Ackermann gives him an opportunity to ingratiate himself with someone more powerful than him. For Erich is lonely, and he has a story to tell. Whether or not he should do so is another matter entirely. Once Maurice has made his name, he sets off in pursuit of other people's stories. He doesn't care where he finds them - or to whom they belong - as long as they help him rise to the top.

E R BRAITHWAITE **To Sir with Love** NF (1959, 185 pages)



This is the story of a dedicated school teacher who turns hate into love, teenage rebelliousness into self-respect and contempt into consideration for others. It is the story of a man's own integrity winning through against all the odds. **Included on the Big Jubilee Read list selected to celebrate the diamond jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II**

Oyinkan BRAITHWAITE **My sister, the serial killer** (2018, 272 pages)



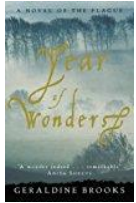
When Korede's dinner is interrupted one night by a distress call from her sister, Ayoola, she knows what's expected of her: bleach, rubber gloves, nerves of steel and a strong stomach. This'll be the third boyfriend Ayoola's dispatched in, quote, self-defence and the third mess that her lethal little sibling has left Korede to clear away. She should probably go to the police for the good of the menfolk of Nigeria, but she loves her sister and, as they say, family always comes first. Until, that is, Ayoola starts dating the doctor where Korede works as a nurse. Korede's long been in love with him, and isn't prepared to see him wind up with a knife in his back: but to save one would mean sacrificing the other...

Shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction and Longlisted for the Booker Prize in 2019

Rhidian BROOK **The aftermath** (2014, 336 pages)

In the bitter winter of 1946, Rachael Morgan arrives in the ruins of Hamburg with her only remaining son Edmund. Here she is reunited with her husband Lewis, a British colonel charged with rebuilding the shattered city; but as they set off for their new home, Rachael is stunned to discover that Lewis has made an extraordinary decision: they will be sharing the grand house with its previous owners, a German widower and his troubled daughter. In this charged atmosphere, enmity and grief give way to passion and betrayal.

Geraldine BROOKS **Year of wonders: a novel of the plague** (2001, 336 pages)



When an infected bolt of cloth carries plague from London to an isolated village, a housemaid named Anna Frith emerges as an unlikely heroine and healer.

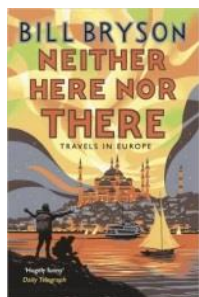
Through Anna's eyes we follow the story of the fateful year of 1666, as she and her fellow villagers confront the spread of disease and superstition. As death reaches into every household and villagers turn from prayers to murderous witch-hunting, Anna must find the strength to confront the disintegration of her community and the lure of illicit love. As she struggles to survive and grow, a year of catastrophe becomes instead annus mirabilis, a "year of wonders." Inspired by the true story of Eyam, known as "the plague village".

Joe BROWNING-WROE **A terrible Kindness** (2022, 381 pages)



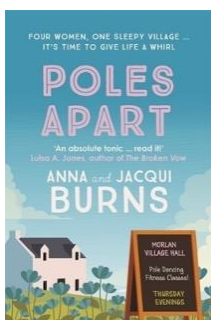
October 1966, news hits of a landslide at a coal mine. It has buried a school - Aberfan. William Lavery decides he must act, so he volunteers to attend. It will be his first job as an embalmer, and it will be one he never forgets. His work that night will force him to think about the little boy he was, and the losses he has worked so hard to forget. But compassion can have surprising consequences, because - as William discovers - giving so much to others can sometimes help us heal ourselves. **Richard and Judy Book Club choice**

Bill BRYSON **Neither here nor there (Non-Fiction)** (1998, 320 pages)



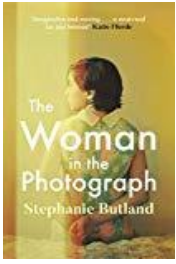
Bryson brings his unique brand of humour to bear on Europe as he shoulders his backpack, keeps a tight hold on his wallet, and journeys from Hammerfest, the northernmost town on the continent, to Istanbul on the cusp of Asia, retracing his travels as a student twenty years before. Whether braving the homicidal motorists of Paris, being robbed by gypsies in Florence, attempting *not* to order tripe and eyeballs in a German restaurant or window-shopping in the sex shops of the Reeperbahn, Bryson takes in the sights, dissects the culture and illuminates each place and person with his hilariously caustic observations. He even goes to Liechtenstein.

Anna and Jaqui BURNS **Poles Apart** (2024, 320 pages)



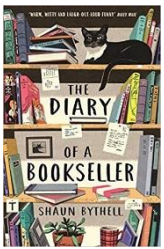
The Pembrokeshire village of Morlan is a beautiful place to live, but breathtaking views of the Welsh coastline aside, four of the female residents find themselves stuck in a painful rut. The arrival of pole dancing exercise classes in the village hall offers each of them a chance to bond and discover previously hidden strengths.

Stephanie BUTLAND The Woman in the photograph (2019, 365 pages)



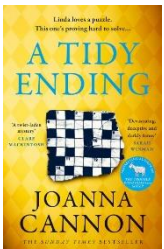
1968. Veronica Moon, a junior photographer for a local newspaper, is frustrated by her (male) colleagues' failure to take her seriously. And then she meets Leonie on the picket line of the Ford factory at Dagenham. So begins a tumultuous, passionate and intoxicating friendship. Leonie is ahead of her time and fighting for women's equality with everything she has. She offers Veronica an exciting, free life at the dawn of a great change. Fifty years later, Leonie is gone, and Veronica leads a reclusive life. Her groundbreaking career was cut short by one of the most famous photographs of the twentieth century. Now, that controversial picture hangs as the centrepiece of a new feminist exhibition curated by Leonie's niece.

Shaun BYTHELL The Diary of a bookseller (Non-Fiction) (2017, 310 pages)



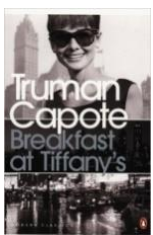
Shaun Bythell owns The Bookshop, Wigtown - Scotland's largest second-hand bookshop. It contains 100,000 books, spread over a mile of shelving, with twisting corridors and roaring fires, and all set in a beautiful, rural town by the edge of the sea. A book-lover's paradise? Well, almost ... In these wry and hilarious diaries, Shaun provides an inside look at the trials and tribulations of life in the book trade, from struggles with eccentric customers to wrangles with his own staff, who include the ski-suit-wearing, bin-foraging Nicky.

Joanna CANNON – A Tidy Ending (2022, 415 pages)



Meet Linda. Linda lives a nice, normal life, on a nice, normal street with Terry, her perfectly ordinary husband. Linda's not like everyone else, she keeps herself to herself. But she's good at solving puzzles and there are times she sees things other people might have overlooked. Because nothing on Cavendish Avenue is quite as it seems. People have started to go missing in the neighbourhood and Linda will soon discover that some secrets can't stay buried forever.

Truman CAPOTE Breakfast at Tiffany's ([1958] 2000, 157 pages)

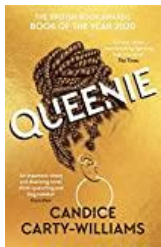


The classic story of Holly Golightly - generally up all night drinking cocktails and breaking hearts. She hasn't got a past. She doesn't want to belong to anything or anyone, not even to her one-eyed rag-bag pirate of a cat. One day Holly might find somewhere she belongs

J.L. CARR A month in the country (1980 [2000], 112 pages)

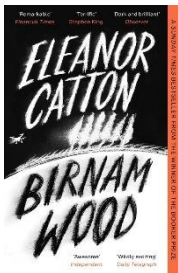
A damaged survivor of the First World War, Tom Birkin finds refuge in the quiet village church of Osgodby where he is to spend the summer uncovering a huge medieval wall-painting. Immersed in the peace and beauty of the countryside and the unchanging rhythms of village life he experiences a sense of renewal and belief in the future. Now an old man, Birkin looks back on the idyllic summer of 1920, remembering a vanished place of blissful calm, untouched by change, a precious moment he has carried with him through the disappointments of the years.

Candice CARTY-WILLIAMS **Queenie** (2019, 392 pages)



Queenie Jenkins is a twenty-five-year-old Jamaican British woman living in London, straddling two cultures and slotting neatly into neither. She works at a national newspaper, where she's constantly forced to compare herself to her white middle class peers. After a messy break up from her long-term white boyfriend, Queenie seeks comfort in all the wrong places...including several hazardous men who do a good job of occupying brain space and a bad job of affirming self-worth. As Queenie careens from one questionable decision to another, she finds herself wondering, "What are you doing? Why are you doing it? Who do you want to be?"—all of the questions today's woman must face in a world trying to answer them for her. *Shortlisted for the Costa First Novel Prize 2019*

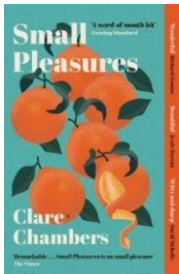
Eleanor CATTON **Birnam Wood** (2023, 423 pages)



Five years ago, Mira Bunting founded a guerrilla gardening group: Birnam Wood. An undeclared, unregulated, sometimes-criminal, sometimes-philanthropic gathering of friends, this activist collective plants crops wherever no one will notice, on the sides of roads, in forgotten parks, and neglected backyards. For years, the group has struggled to break even. Then Mira stumbles on a way to finally set the group up for the long term: a landslide has closed the Korowai Pass, cutting off the town of Thorndike. Natural disaster has created an opportunity, but Mira is not the only one interested in

Thorndike. **Winner of The Writers Prize 2024. Shortlisted for The Women's Prize for Fiction**

Clare CHAMBERS **Small Pleasures** (2020, 350 pages)



1957, south-east suburbs of London. Jean Swinney is a feature writer on a local paper, disappointed in love and - on the brink of 40 - living a limited existence with her truculent mother: a small life from which there is no likelihood of escape. When a young Swiss woman, Gretchen Tilbury, contacts the paper to claim that her daughter is the result of a virgin birth, it is down to Jean to discover whether she is a miracle or a fraud. But the more Jean investigates, the more her life becomes strangely (and not unpleasantly) intertwined with that of the Tilburys. **Womens Prize Longlist**

Jessamine CHAN – **The School for Good Mothers** (2022, 319 pages)



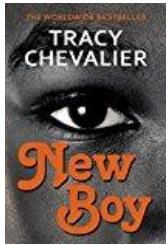
Frida Liu is a 39-year-old single mom, reported for leaving her daughter, Harriet, alone for a stretch of time. The state's increasingly empowered Child Protective Services set about surveilling Frida's home. After a series of almost comically bad supervised visits, a judge deems Frida temporarily unfit. Her only hope for continuing to share custody of Harriet with her ex (and his doting girlfriend) is to pass exams meted out by a prized new government program. This 12-month, live-in program, a 'school' situated on an abandoned college campus, will retrain

Frida in how best to parent. **Longlisted for The Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction**

Tracy CHEVALIER *The Last runaway* (2013, 400 pages)

Honor Bright is a sheltered Quaker who has rarely ventured out of 1850s Dorset when she impulsively emigrates to America. Opposed to the slavery that defines and divides the country, she finds her principles tested to the limit when a runaway slave appears at the farm of her new family. In this tough, unsentimental place where whisky bottles sit alongside quilts, Honor befriends two spirited women who will teach her how to turn ideas into actions.

Tracy CHEVALIER *New boy* (2017, 288 pages)



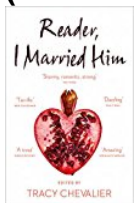
Arriving at his fifth school in as many years, a diplomat's son, Osei Kokote, knows he needs an ally if he is to survive his first day so he's lucky to hit it off with Dee, the most popular girl in school. But one student can't stand to witness this budding relationship: Ian decides to destroy the friendship between the black boy and the golden girl. By the end of the day, the school and its key players - teachers and pupils alike - will never be the same again. *This contemporary version of Othello one of the Hogarth series of Shakespeare re-*

tellings.

Tracy CHEVALIER *Remarkable Creatures* (2009, 352 pages)

In the early nineteenth century, a windswept beach along the English coast brims with fossils for those with the eye! From the moment she's struck by lightning as a baby, it is clear Mary Anning is marked for greatness. When she uncovers unknown dinosaur fossils in the cliffs near her home, she sets the scientific world alight, challenging ideas about the world's creation and stimulating debate over our origins. In an arena dominated by men, however, Mary is soon reduced to a serving role, facing prejudice from the academic community, vicious gossip from neighbours, and the heartbreak of forbidden love. Even nature is a threat, throwing bitter cold, storms, and landslips at her. Luckily Mary finds an unlikely champion in prickly, intelligent Elizabeth Philpot, a middle-class spinster who is also fossil-obsessed.

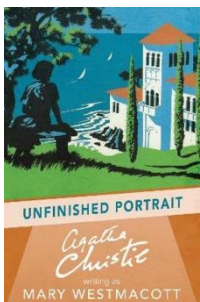
Tracy CHEVALIER (editor) *Reader, I married him: stories inspired by Jane Eyre (Short stories)* (2016, 307 pages)



This collection of original stories by today's finest women writers takes inspiration from a line in Charlotte Brontë's most beloved novel, *Jane Eyre*. The stories pay homage to the literary genius of Charlotte Brontë, and demonstrate once again that her extraordinary vision continues to inspire readers and writers. The collection features stories by Tracy Chevalier, Tessa Hadley, Helen Dunmore, Kirsty Gunn, Joanna Briscoe, Jane Gardam, Emma Donoghue, Susan Hill,

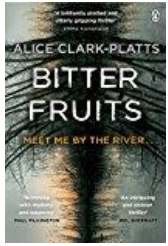
Francine Prose, Elif Shafak, Evie Wyld, Patricia Park, Salley Vickers, Nadifa Mohamed, Esther Freud, Linda Grant, Sarah Hall, Lionel Shriver, Audrey Niffenegger, Namwali Serpell, and Elizabeth McCracken.

Agatha CHRISTIE/Mary WESTMACOTT *Unfinished Portrait* (1934, 528 pages)



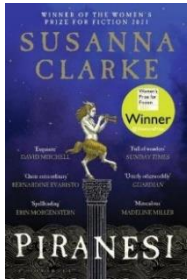
Bereft of the three people she has held most dear - her mother, her husband and her daughter - Celia is on the verge of suicide. Then one night on an exotic island she meets Larraby, a successful portrait painter, and through a long night of talk reveals how she is afraid to commit herself to a second chance of happiness with another person, yet is not brave enough to face life alone. Can Larraby help Celia come to terms with the past or will they part, her outcome still uncertain? **Semi-autobiographical.**

Alice CLARK-PLATTS **Bitter fruits** (2015, 439 pages)



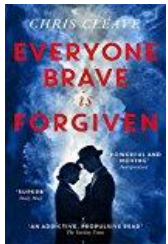
The murder of a first-year student at Durham University shocks the city. But the very last thing anyone expects is an instant confession.... As Detective Inspector Erica Martin investigates Joyce College, a cradle for the country's future elite, she finds a close-knit community of secrets, jealousy and obsession. The picture of the victim, Emily Brabents, that begins to emerge is that of a girl wanted by everyone, but not truly known by anyone. Anyone, that is, except Daniel Shepherd. Her fellow student, ever-faithful friend and the only one who cares. The only one who would do anything for her....

Susanna CLARKE **Piranesi** (2020, 245 pages)



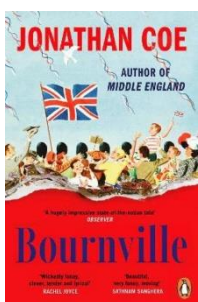
Piranesi lives in the House. Perhaps he always has. In his notebooks, day after day, he makes a clear and careful record of its wonders. On Tuesdays and Fridays Piranesi sees his friend, the Other. At other times he brings tributes of food and waterlilies to the Dead. But mostly, he is alone. Messages begin to appear, scratched out in chalk on the pavements. There is someone new in the House. But who are they and what do they want? **Winner of the Women's Prize for Fiction**

Chris CLEAVE **Everyone brave is forgiven** (2016, 438 pages)



It's 1939 and Mary, a young socialite, is determined to shock her blueblood political family by volunteering for the war effort. She is assigned as a teacher to children who were evacuated from London and have been rejected by the countryside because they are infirm, mentally disabled, or have coloured skin. Tom, is distraught when his best friend, Alastair, enlists. But Tom finds distraction in Mary, first as her employer and then as their relationship quickly develops in the emotionally charged times. When Mary meets Alastair, the three are drawn into a tragic love triangle and—while war escalates and bombs begin falling around them—further into a new world unlike any they've ever known.

Jonathan COE – Bournville (2022, 432 pages)

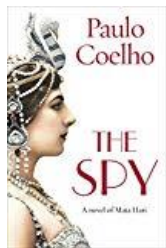


In Bournville, a placid suburb of Birmingham, sits a famous chocolate factory. For 11-year-old Mary and her family in 1945, it's the centre of the world. Mary will go on to live through the Coronation and the World Cup final, royal weddings and royal funerals, Brexit and Covid-19. She'll have children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Parts of the chocolate factory will be transformed into a theme park, as modern life and the city crowd in on their peaceful enclave. As we travel through 75 years of social change, one pressing question starts to emerge: will these changing times bring Mary's family - and their country - closer together, or leave them more adrift and divided than ever before?

Paulo COELHO **The Alchemist** (1998, 224 pages)

This magical fable is a beautiful parable about learning to listen to your heart, read the omens strewn along life's path and, above all, follow your dreams. Santiago, a young shepherd living in the hills of Andalucia, feels that there is more to life than his humble home and his flock. One day he finds the courage to follow his dreams into distant land. The people he meets along the way, the things he sees and the wisdom he learns are life-changing. With Paulo Coelho's visionary blend of spirituality, magical realism and folklore, *The Alchemist* is a story with the power to inspire nations and change people's lives.

Paolo COELHO The Spy (2016, 190 pages)



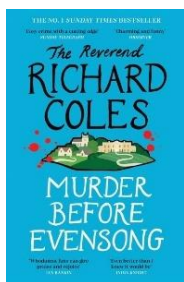
When Mata Hari arrived in Paris she was penniless. Within months she was the most celebrated woman in the city. As a dancer, she shocked and delighted audiences; as a courtesan, she bewitched the era's richest and most powerful men. But as paranoia consumed a country at war, Mata Hari's lifestyle brought her under suspicion. In 1917, she was arrested in her hotel room on the Champs Elysees, and accused of espionage. Told in Mata Hari's voice through her final letter, *The Spy* is the unforgettable story of a woman who dared to defy convention and who paid the ultimate price. (*translated from Portuguese*)

Julie COHEN The Two lives of Louis & Louise (2018, 307 pages)



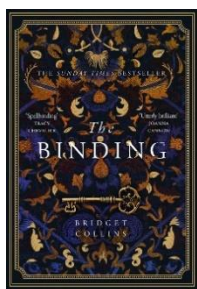
If you could look at one life in two different ways, what would you see? Louis and Louise are separated by a single moment in time, a strike of chance that decided their future. The day they were born is when their story began. In one, Louis David Alder is born a male. In the other, Louise Dawn Alder is born a female. Louis and Louise are the same in many ways - they have the same best friends, the same parents, the same dream of being a writer and leaving their hometown in Maine as soon as they can. But because of their gender, everything looks different. Certain things will happen in their lives to shape them, hurt them, build them back up again. But what will bring them back home?

Richard COLES – Murder before Evensong (2022, 371 pages)



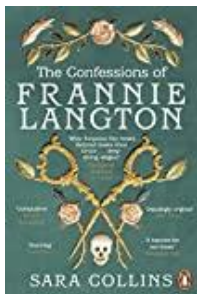
Canon Daniel Clement is Rector of Champton. Audrey Clement, his widowed mother, lives with him at the Rectory on the estate. He has two dachshunds, Cosmo and Hilda. The story begins with Daniel announcing from the pulpit a plan to install a lavatory in church. This is long overdue, he thinks and so does owner of the estate, Bernard de Floures, but the announcement goes down badly with the parish. Firm opposition comes from Mrs Harper and Mrs Dollinger of the Flower Guild and others who do not like the thought of matters lavatorial in church.

Bridget COLLINS The Binding (2019, 408 pages)



Emmett Farmer is working in the fields when a letter arrives summoning him to begin an apprenticeship. He will work for a Bookbinder, a vocation that arouses fear, superstition, and prejudice. He will learn to hand-craft beautiful volumes, and within each he will capture something unique and extraordinary. If there's something you want to forget, he can help. Your past will be stored safely in a book and you will never remember your secret, however terrible. Then one day Emmett makes an astonishing discovery: one of them has his name on

Sara COLLINS *The Confessions of Frannie Langton* (2019, 375 pages)



1826, and all of London is in a frenzy. Crowds gather at the gates of the Old Bailey to watch as Frannie Langton, maid to Mr and Mrs Benham, goes on trial for their murder. The testimonies against her are damning - slave, whore, seductress. And they may be the truth. But they are not the whole truth. For the first time Frannie must tell her story. *Winner of the Costa book awards First Novel prize 2019*

Wilkie COLLINS *The Moonstone* (1868, 384 pages)

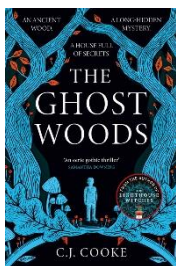
The Moonstone, a priceless yellow diamond, is looted from an Indian temple and maliciously bequeathed to Rachel Verinder. On her eighteenth birthday, her friend and suitor Franklin Blake brings the gift to her. That very night, it is stolen again. No one is above suspicion, as the idiosyncratic Sergeant Cuff and the Franklin piece together a puzzling series of events as mystifying as an opium dream and as deceptive as the nearby Shivering Sand.

Joseph CONRAD *Heart of darkness* (1902 2012, 96 pages)



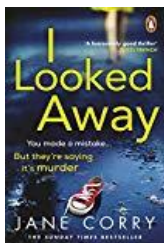
Dark allegory describes the narrator's journey up the Congo River and his meeting with, and fascination by, Mr. Kurtz, a mysterious personage who dominates the unruly inhabitants of the region. Masterly blend of adventure, character development, psychological penetration. Considered by many Conrad's finest, most enigmatic story.

C J COOKE *The Ghost Woods* (2022, 408 pages)



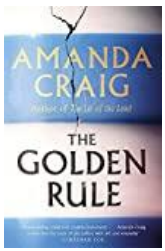
In the midst of the woods stands a house called Lichen Hall. This place is shrouded in folklore - old stories of ghosts, of witches, of a child who is not quite a child. Pearl Gorham arrives in 1965, one of a string of young women sent to Lichen Hall to give birth. And she soon suspects the proprietors are hiding something. Then she meets the mysterious mother and young boy who live in the grounds - and together they begin to unpick the secrets of this place. As the truth comes to the surface and the darkness moves in, Pearl must rethink everything she knew - and risk what she holds most dear.

Jane CORRY *I looked away* (2019, 499 pages)



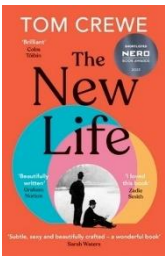
Every Monday, 49-year-old Ellie looks after her grandson Josh. She loves him more than anyone else in the world. The only thing that can mar her happiness is her husband's affair. But he swears it's over now, and Ellie has decided to be thankful for what she's got. Then one day, while she's looking after Josh, her husband gets a call from *that woman*. And just for a moment, Ellie takes her eyes off her grandson. What happens next will change her life forever. Because Ellie is hiding something in her past....

Amanda CRAIG The Golden rule (2020, 400 pages)



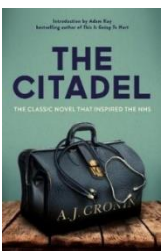
When Hannah is invited into the first class carriage of the London to Penzance train by Jinni, she walks into a spider's web. Now a poor young single mother, Hannah once escaped Cornwall to go to university. But once she married Jake and had his child, her dreams were crushed into bitter disillusion. Her husband has left her for Eve, rich and childless, and Hannah has been surviving by becoming a cleaner in London. Jinni is equally angry and bitter, and in the course of their journey the two women agree to murder each other's husbands. After all, they are strangers on a train - who could possibly connect them? *Longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction 2021*

Tom CREWE The New Life (2023, 376 pages)



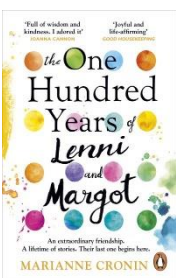
John Addington is married to Catherine, but has spent his life trying to navigate his desires for men. Now there is Frank, the working-class printer he meets at the Serpentine swimming lake. Henry Ellis is married to Edith, but she has fallen in love with Angelica, who wants Edith all for herself. These two Victorian marriages, each an unexpected love triangle, are stalked by guilt and shame. But they are also in the vanguard of new ideas for social equality, women's rights and relationships which break convention. 'The New Life' explores the possibilities of love and life, set against the riveting backdrop of the Oscar Wilde trial. **Winner of The Sunday Times New Young Writer of the Year 2024. Shortlisted for Walter Scott Prize and The Nero Book Awards 2023**

A.J. CRONIN The Citadel (1939 432 pages)



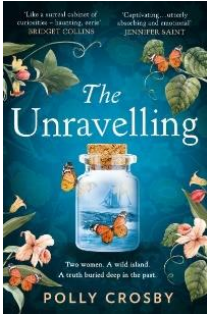
The Citadel follows the life of Andrew Manson, a young and idealistic Scottish doctor, as he navigates the challenges of practicing medicine across interwar Wales and England. Based on Cronin's own experiences as a physician, *The Citadel* boldly confronts traditional medical ethics, and has been noted as one of the inspirations for the formation of the National Health Service.

Marianne CRONIN The One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot (2021, 391 pages)



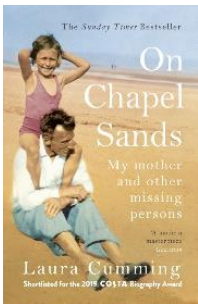
Life is short - no one knows that better than seventeen year-old Lenni Petterssen. On the Terminal Ward, the nurses are offering their condolences already, but Lenni still has plenty of living to do. When she meets 83-year-old Margot Macrae, a fellow patient offering new friendship and enviable artistic skills, Lenni's life begins to soar in ways she'd never imagined. As their bond deepens, a world of stories opens up: of wartime love and loss, of misunderstanding and reconciliation, of courage, kindness and joy. Stories that have led Lenni and Margot to the end of their days.

Polly CROSBY – The Unravelling (2021, 326 pages)



Tartelin Brown accepts a job as a PA to a reclusive lepidopterist, she on a wild island with a mysterious history. She has been employed by Marianne Stourbridge to hunt for butterflies, but quickly uncovers something far more intriguing. The island and Marianne share a remarkable past, and what happened all those years ago has left its scars. The island has a strange effect on Tartelin, too, finally allowing her to confront her own, painful, memories. As she does, Marianne's story begins to unravel around her, revealing an extraordinary tale of two girls, an obsession with pearls, and a truth beyond imagination.

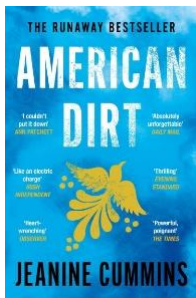
Laura CUMMING On Chapel Sands (NF) (2019 301 pages)



In 1929, a small child was kidnapped from a Lincolnshire beach. Five days later she was found in a nearby village. The child remembered nothing of these events and nobody ever spoke of them. It was another 50 years before she even learned of the kidnap. The girl became an artist and had a daughter, art writer Laura Cumming. Cumming grew up enthralled by her mother's strange tales of life in a seaside hamlet of the 1930s. Cumming began investigating with a few criss-crossing lives in this fraction of English coast - the postman, the grocer, the elusive baker - but soon her search spread across the globe as she discovered just how many lives were affected

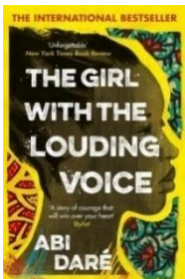
by what happened that day on the beach. *Shortlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction 2019*

Jeanine CUMMINS American Dirt (2020, 457 pages)



'American Dirt' explores the experience of attempting to illegally cross the US-Mexico border, a journey which thousands of migrants make each year. Yesterday, Lydia had a bookshop. Yesterday, Lydia was married to a journalist. Yesterday, she was with everyone she loved most in the world. Today, her eight-year-old son Luca is all she has left. For him, she will carry a machete strapped to her leg. For him, she will leap onto the roof of a high speed train. For him, she will find the strength to keep running. **Richard and Judy book club pick**

Abi DARE The Girl with the Louding Voice (2020, 314 pages)



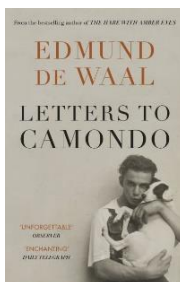
Adunni is a 14-year-old Nigerian girl who knows what she wants: an education. Removed from school and sold as a 3rd wife to an old man, Adunni's life amounts to this: 4 goats, 2 bags of rice, some chickens and a new TV. When unspeakable tragedy swiftly strikes in her new home, she is secretly sold as a domestic servant to a household in the wealthy enclaves of Lagos, where no one will talk about the strange disappearance of her predecessor, Rebecca. No one but Adunni. **Shortlisted for the 2020 Desmond Elliott Prize**

Elizabeth DAY **The Party** (2017, 294 pages)



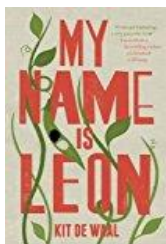
Martin Gilmour is an outsider. When he wins a scholarship to Burtonbury School, he doesn't wear the right clothes or speak with the right kind of accent. But then he meets the dazzling, popular and wealthy Ben Fitzmaurice, and gains admission to an exclusive world. Soon Martin is enjoying tennis parties and Easter egg hunts at the Fitzmaurice family's estate, as Ben becomes the brother he never had. But Martin has a secret. He knows something about Ben, something he will never tell. It is a secret that will bind the two of them together for the best part of 25 years. *A Richard and Judy Summer Club choice for 2018*

Edmund DE WAAL – **Letters to Camondo NF** (2021, 182 pages)



Count Moise de Camondo lived a few doors away from Edmund de Waal's forbears, the Ephrussi, first encountered in his bestselling memoir 'The Hare with Amber Eyes'. The Camondos were part of Belle Epoque high society. They were also targets of anti-semitism. Camondo created a spectacular house filled with the greatest private collection of French eighteenth-century art. Edmund de Waal has explored this beautiful palace; the lavish rooms, exquisite objects and detailed archives.

Kit DE WAAL **My name is Leon** (2016, 262 pages)



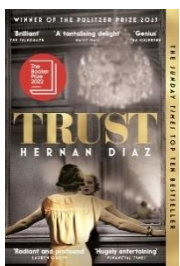
Leon is nine, and has a perfect baby brother called Jake. They have gone to live with Maureen, who has fuzzy red hair like a halo, and a belly like Father Christmas. But the adults are speaking in low voices, and wearing pretend faces. They are threatening to give Jake to strangers. Since Jake is white and Leon is not. Evoking a Britain of the early eighties, *My Name is Leon* is a heart-breaking story of love, identity and learning to overcome unbearable loss. Of the fierce bond between siblings. And how - just when we least expect it - we manage to find our way home.

J P DELANEY **Playing nice** (2020, 424 pages)



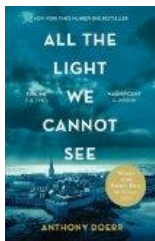
Pete answers the door to a parent's worst nightmare. On his doorstep is a stranger, Miles Lambert, who breaks the news that Pete's two-year-old, Theo, isn't his biological child after all - he is Miles's, switched with the Lamberts' baby at birth by an understaffed hospital. Reeling from shock, Peter and his partner agree that, rather than swap the children back, it's better to stay as they are but to involve the other family in their children's lives. But a plan to sue the hospital triggers an official investigation that unearths some questions about just what happened on the day the babies were switched. *A Richard and Judy Spring 2021 choice*

Hernan DIAZ - **Trust** (2022, 402 pages)



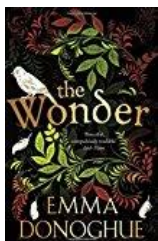
Even through the roar and effervescence of the 1920s, everyone in New York has heard of Benjamin and Helen Rask. He is a legendary Wall Street tycoon; she is the daughter of eccentric aristocrats. Together, they have risen to the very top of a world of seemingly endless wealth - all as a decade of excess and speculation draws to an end. But at what cost have they acquired their immense fortune? **Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction 2023, Booker Prize longlisted**

Anthony DOERR *All the light we cannot see* (2014, 544 pages)



This is a novel about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II. Marie-Laure has been blind since the age of six. Her father builds a perfect miniature of their Paris neighbourhood so she can memorize it by touch and navigate her way home. But when the Nazis invade, father and daughter flee with a dangerous secret. *Winner of the Pulitzer prize for fiction.*

Emma DONOGHUE *The Wonder* (2016, 256 pages)

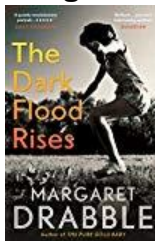


Set in the Irish Midlands in the 1850s, Emma Donoghue's *The Wonder* is inspired by numerous European and North American cases of 'fasting girls' between the sixteenth century and the twentieth. An English nurse brought to a small Irish village to observe what appears to be a miracle - a girl said to have survived without food for months - soon finds herself fighting to save the child's life. Tourists flock to the cabin of 11-year-old Anna O'Donnell, who believes herself to be living off manna from heaven, and a journalist is sent to cover the sensation. Lib Wright, a veteran of Florence Nightingale's Crimean campaign, is hired to keep watch over the girl. A tale of two strangers who transform each other's lives, a powerful psychological thriller, and a story of love pitted against evil.

Louise DOUGHTY *Apple Tree Yard* (2014, 448 pages)

There can't be a woman alive who hasn't once realised, in a moment of panic that she's in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong man; a stunning psychological thriller about a respected female scientist, and the single reckless decision that leads to her standing trial for murder.

Margaret DRABBLE *The Dark flood rises* (2016, 326 pages)

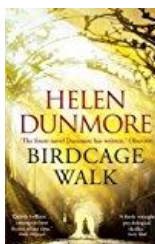


Fran may be old but she's not going without a fight. So she dyes her hair, enjoys every glass of red wine, drives around the country for her job with a housing charity and lives in an insalubrious tower block that her loved ones disapprove of. And as each of them - her pampered ex Claude, old friend Jo, flamboyant son Christopher and earnest daughter Poppet - seeks happiness in their own way, what will the last reckoning be? Will they be waving or drowning when the end comes?

Carol Ann DUFFY *The World's Wife (Poetry)* (2007, 96 pages)

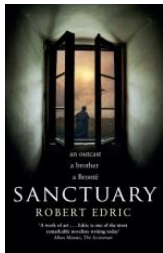
Draws on some weighty emotional experiences: loneliness, jealousy, self-loathing, desire, the fierceness of a mother's love. This book reveals the foibles of the great, the ghastly and the ordinary bloke and the sufferings of those closest to them.

Helen DUNMORE *Birdcage walk* (2017, 406 pages)



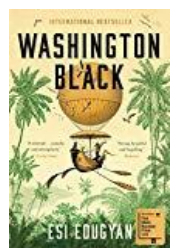
It is 1792 and Europe is seized by political turmoil and violence. Lizzie Fawkes has grown up in radical circles where each step of the French Revolution is followed with eager idealism. But she has recently married John Diner Tredevant, a property developer who is heavily invested in Bristol's housing boom, and he has everything to lose from social upheaval and the prospect of war. Soon his plans for a magnificent terrace built above the 200-foot drop of the gorge come under threat. Diner's passion for Lizzie darkens until she finds herself dangerously alone. The last novel from Helen Dunmore, who died in 2017.

Robert EDRIC **Sanctuary** (2014, 296 pages)



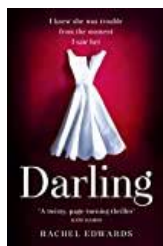
Haworth, West Yorkshire, 1848. Branwell Brontë - unexhibited artist, unacknowledged writer, sacked railwayman, disgraced tutor and spurned lover, finds himself unhappily back in Haworth Parsonage, to face the crushing disappointment of his father and his three sisters, whose own pseudonymous successes are only just becoming apparent. With his health failing rapidly, his literary aspirations abandoned and his once loyal circle of friends shrinking fast, Branwell lives in a world of secrets, conspiracies and seemingly endless betrayals. To restore himself to a creative and fulfilling existence in the face of an increasingly claustrophobic environment, he returns to the drugs, alcohol and the morbid self-delusion which have already played such a large part in his unhappy life.

Esi EDUGYAN **Washington Black: a novel** (2018, 419 pages)



When two English brothers take the helm of a Barbados sugar plantation, nervousness and fear run high. Washington Black - an eleven-year-old field slave who has known no other life - is aghast to find himself selected as personal servant to one of these men. His new master is the eccentric Christopher Wilde - naturalist, explorer, scientist, inventor and abolitionist - whose single-minded pursuit of the perfect aerial machine mystifies all around him. Through Wilde, Washington is initiated into a world of wonder: a world where even a boy born in chains may embrace a life of dignity and meaning. But when a man is killed and a bounty is placed on Wash's head, they must abandon everything and flee together. *Shortlisted for the Man Booker prize 2018*

Rachel EDWARDS **Darling** (2018, 343 pages)

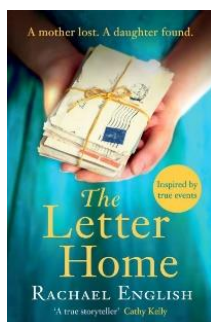


Lola doesn't particularly want a new stepmother. Especially not one who has come out of nowhere and only been with her dad for three months. And – she's not racist or anything – but since when did her dad fancy black women anyway? Darling didn't particularly want a new stepdaughter. Especially not one as spiteful and spoilt as Lola. She does want Lola's dad though. And he wants her, so that's that: Darling and Lola will just have to get used to each other. Unless Lola can find a way to get rid of Darling.

George ELIOT **Silas Marner** (1861, 240 pages)

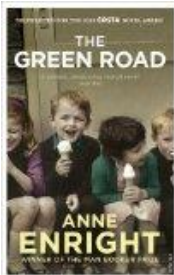
Gentle linen weaver Silas Marner is wrongly accused of a heinous theft, and he exiles himself from the world – until he finds redemption and spiritual rebirth through his unselfish love for an abandoned child who mysteriously appears one day at his isolated cottage. Sombre, yet hopeful, Eliot's realistic depiction of an irretrievable past, tempered with the magical elements of myth and fairy tale, remains timeless in its understanding of human nature and is beloved by every generation.

Rachael ENGLISH – **The Letter home** (2022, 517 pages)



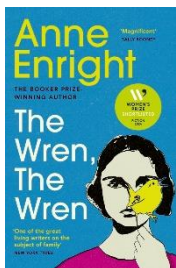
When Jessie Daly loses her job, her flat and her relationship, she travels home to Ireland's west coast and helps an old friend researching what happened in the area during the 1840s Famine. On the other side of the Atlantic, Kaitlin Wilson is researching her family tree. She knows her ancestors left Ireland for Boston in the 19th century. Everything else is a mystery. Kaitlin unearths a fascinating story, but her research forces her to confront uncomfortable truths about herself and her family and also uncover a heartbreaking connection to a young woman in the west of Ireland.

Anne ENRIGHT The Green Road (2015, 309 pages)



Spanning thirty years, it tells the story of Rosaleen, matriarch of the Madigans, a family on the cusp of either coming together or falling irreparably apart. As they grow up, Rosaleen's four children leave the west of Ireland for lives they could have never imagined in Dublin, New York, and Mali, West Africa. In her early old age their difficult, wonderful mother announces that she's decided to sell the house and divide the proceeds. Her adult children come back for a last Christmas, with the feeling that their childhoods are being erased, their personal history bought and sold. *Shortlisted for the Bailey's, Costa and Man Booker Prizes.*

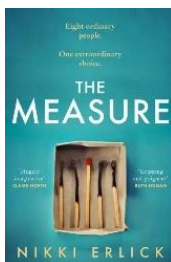
Anne ENRIGHT The Wren, The Wren (2023, 276 pages)



Nell - funny, brave and so much loved - is a young woman with adventure on her mind. As she sets out into the world, she finds her family history hard to escape. For her mother, Carmel, Nell's leaving home opens a space in her heart, where the turmoil of a lifetime begins to churn. And across the generations falls the long shadow of Carmel's famous father, an Irish poet of beautiful words and brutal actions. This is a meditation on love: spiritual, romantic, darkly sexual or genetic. A generational saga that traces the inheritance not just of trauma but also of wonder, it is a testament to the

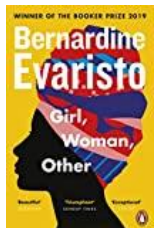
glorious resilience of women in the face of promises false and true. **Winner of The Writers Prize 2024. Shortlisted for The Women's Prize for Fiction**

Nikki ERLICK – The Measure (2022, 352 pages)



It seems like just another morning. You make a cup of tea. Check the news. Open the front door. On your doorstep is a box. Inside the box is the exact number of years you have left to live. The same box appears on every doorstep across the world. Do you open yours? **Librarian recommended**

Bernardine EVARISTO Girl, woman, other (2019, 453 pages)



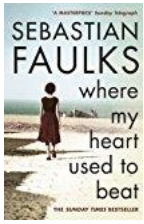
From Newcastle to Cornwall, from the birth of the twentieth century to the teens of the twenty-first, *Girl, Woman, Other* follows a cast of twelve characters on their personal journeys through this country and the last hundred years. They're each looking for something - a shared past, an unexpected future, a place to call home, somewhere to fit in, a lover, a missed mother, a lost father, even just a touch of hope . . . *Joint Winner of the Booker Prize 2019*

C M EWAN – The Interview (2022, 450 pages)



It's 5 p.m. on a Friday. You have been called to an interview for your dream job. In a stunning office 13 floors above the city below, you are all alone with the man interviewing you. Everyone else has gone home for the weekend. The interview gets more and more disturbing. You're feeling scared. Your only way out is to answer a seemingly impossible question. If you can't - what happens next? **Librarian recommended**

Sebastian FAULKS *Where my heart used to beat* (2015, 400 pages)



On a small island off the south coast of France, Robert Hendricks – an English doctor who has seen the best and the worst the twentieth century had to offer – is forced to confront the events that made up his life. His host is Alexander Pereira, a man who seems to know more about his guest than Hendricks himself does. The search for the past takes us through the war in Italy in 1944, a passionate love that seems to hold out hope, the great days of idealistic work in the 1960s and finally – unforgettably – back into the trenches of the Western Front. This novel casts a long, baleful light over the century we have left behind but may never fully understand.

Ellen FELDMAN *The Unwitting* (2014, 286 pages)

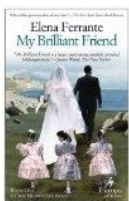


On a bright November day in 1963, President Kennedy is shot. That same day, Nell Benjamin receives a phone call with news about her husband. As the nation mourns its public loss, Nell has her private grief to reckon with, as well as a revelation about Charlie that turns her understanding of her marriage on its head, along with the world she thought she knew. With the Cold War looming ominously over the lives of American citizens in a battle of the Free World against the Communist powers, the blurry lines between what is true, what is good, and what is right tangle with issues of loyalty and love. As the truths Nell discovers about her beloved husband upend the narrative of her life, she must question her own allegiance.

Julian FELLOWES *Past Imperfect* (2009, 528 pages)

Damian Baxter is very, very rich - and he's dying. He lives alone in a big house in Surrey, looked after by a chauffeur, butler, cook and housemaid. He has but one concern: who should inherit his fortune. *Past Imperfect* is the story of a quest. Damian Barker wishes to know if he has a living heir. By the time he married in his late thirties he was sterile (the result of adult mumps), but what about before that unfortunate illness? He was not a virgin. Had he sired a child? A letter from a girlfriend from these times suggests he did. But the letter is anonymous. Damian contacts someone he knew from their days at university. He gives him a list of girls he slept with and sets him a task: find his heir...

Elena FERRANTE *My brilliant friend* (2012, 336 pages)

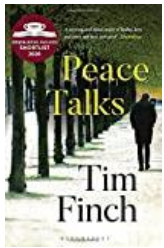


My Brilliant Friend is a story about two friends, Elena and Lila. Ferrante's inimitable style lends itself perfectly to a meticulous portrait of these two women that is also the story of a nation and a touching meditation on the nature of friendship. The story begins in the 1950s, in a poor but vibrant neighbourhood on the outskirts of Naples. Growing up on these tough streets the two girls learn to rely on each other ahead of anyone or anything else. As they grow, as their paths repeatedly diverge and converge, Elena and Lila remain best friends whose respective destinies are reflected and refracted in the other. They are likewise the embodiments of a nation undergoing momentous change. (*translated from Italian*)

William FIENNES **The Music Room (Non-Fiction)** (2009, 224 pages)

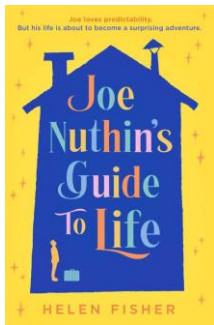
William Fiennes' childhood was one of imagination and curiosity, bounded only by the horizon he saw from the roof-tiles of his ancient family home. His older brother Richard, known for his towering presence, his inventiveness, his great passion for Leeds United, and his suffering due to severe epilepsy, was an adored and charismatic figure in his life. Years later, eager to understand his brother's mind as fully as the ancient trees and secret haunts of his own journey towards adulthood, William Fiennes has written a profoundly moving account of his home, his family's care, and above all, of Richard.

Tim FINCH **Peace talks** (2020, 213 pages)



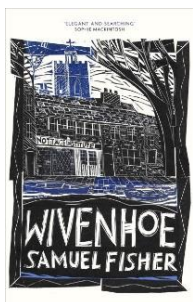
Edvard Behrens is a senior diplomat of some repute, highly regarded for his work on international peace negotiations. Under his arbitration, unimaginable atrocities are coolly dissected; invisible and ancient lines, grown taut and frayed with conflict, redrawn. In his latest post, Edvard has been sent to a nondescript resort hotel in the Tyrol. High up on this mountain, the air is bright and clear. When he isn't working, Edvard reads, walks, listens to music. He confides in no one - no one - no one but his wife Anna. Anna, who he loves with all his heart; Anna, always present and yet forever absent. *Shortlisted for the Costa Novel Prize 2020*

Helen FISHER **Joe Nuthin's Guide to Life (2024, 421 pages)**



A really uplifting novel about a neurodivergent young man who unexpectedly builds a community and saves a friend in need by following - in a way only he can - the advice his late mother left him. **Undiscovered gem Librarian recommended**

Samuel FISHER **Wivenhoe** (2022, 160 pages)



A young man is found brutally murdered in the middle of the snowed-in village of Wivenhoe. Over his body stands another man, axe in hand. The gathered villagers must deal with the consequences of an act that no-one tried to stop. WIVENHOE is a haunting novel set in an alternate present, in a world that is slowly waking up to the fact that it is living through an environmental disaster. Taking place over twenty-four hours and told through the voices of a mother and her adult son, we see how one small community reacts to social breakdown and isolation.

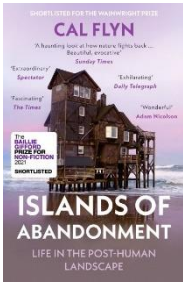
F. Scott FITZGERALD **The Great Gatsby** (1925, 176 pages)

Jay Gatsby is the man who has everything. Everybody who is anybody is seen at his glittering parties. Day and night his Long Island mansion buzzes with bright young things drinking, dancing and debating his mysterious character. For Gatsby always seems alone in the crowd, watching and waiting, though no one knows what for. Beneath the shimmering surface of his life he is hiding a secret: a silent longing that can never be fulfilled. And soon this destructive obsession will force his world to unravel.

F. Scott FITZGERALD Tender is the Night (1934, 320 pages)

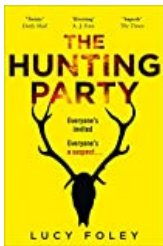
Between the First World War and the Wall Street Crash the French Riviera was the stylish place for wealthy Americans to visit. Among the most fashionable are the Divers, Dick and Nicole who hold court at their villa. Into their circle comes Rosemary Hoyt, a film star, who is instantly attracted to them, but understands little of the dark secrets and hidden corruption that hold them together. As Dick draws closer to Rosemary, he fractures the delicate structure of his marriage and sets both Nicole and himself on to a dangerous path where only the strongest can survive.

Cal FLYN Islands of Abandonment (2021, 376 pages NF)



Cal Flyn's book details abandoned places: ghost towns and exclusion zones, no man's lands and fortress islands - and what happens when nature is allowed to reclaim its place. In Chernobyl, following the nuclear disaster, only a handful of people returned to their dangerously irradiated homes. On an uninhabited Scottish island, feral cattle live entirely wild. In Detroit, entire streets of houses are falling in on themselves, looters slipping through otherwise silent neighbourhoods. .

Lucy FOLEY The Hunting party (2019, 407 pages)



During the languid days of the Christmas break, a group of thirtysomething friends from Oxford meet to welcome in the New Year together, a tradition they began as students ten years ago. For this vacation, they've chosen an idyllic and isolated estate in the Scottish Highlands—the perfect place to get away and unwind by themselves. Amid the boisterous revelry of New Year's Eve, the cord holding them together snaps, just as a historic blizzard seals the lodge off from the outside world. Two days later, on New Year's Day, one of them is dead. . . and another of them did it.

Jamie FORD Songs of Willow Frost (2013, 413 pages)

William Eng has lived at Seattle's Sacred Heart Orphanage for five long years, ever since his mother's listless body was carried from their Chinatown apartment. When, during a trip to the movie theatre, William glimpses an actress on the silver screen, he is immediately struck by her features. Because Willow Frost is many things - a singer, a dancer, a movie star - but most of all, William is convinced, she is his mother. Determined to find her, William attempts to confront the mysteries of his past.

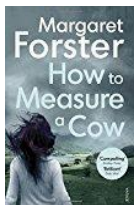
E.M. FORSTER A Passage to India (1924, 416 pages)

When Adela Quested and her elderly companion Mrs Moore arrive in the Indian town of Chandrapore, they quickly feel trapped by its insular and prejudiced 'Anglo-Indian' community. Determined to escape the parochial English enclave and explore the 'real India', they seek the guidance of the charming and mercurial Dr Aziz, a cultivated Indian Muslim. But a mysterious incident occurs while they are exploring the Marabar caves with Aziz, and the well-respected doctor soon finds himself at the centre of a scandal that rouses violent passions among both the British and their Indian subjects.

E.M. FORSTER Room with a View (1908, 168 pages)

A brilliant social comedy about the English middle classes abroad and at home, "A Room with a View" is one of E.M. Forster's most popular novels. The medieval beauty of Florence is the setting for the emotional awakening of Lucy Honeychurch, a young woman travelling abroad for the first time with her cousin Charlotte. On her return to England, in her relationships with her cousin, the unconventional Emersons and her supercilious fiance Cecil, Lucy is torn between lingering Victorian proprieties and the spontaneous promptings of her heart.

Margaret FORSTER How to measure a cow (2016, 304 pages)



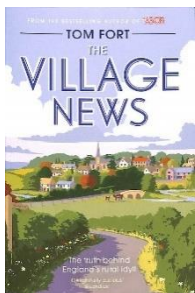
Tara Fraser has a secret. Desperate to escape herself and her past, she changes her name, packs up her London home and moves to a town in the North of England where she knows no one. But one of her new neighbours, Nancy, is intrigued by her. And as hard as Tara tries to distance herself, she starts to drop her guard. Then a letter arrives. An old friend wants to meet up. Struggling to keep her old life at bay, Tara soon discovers the dangers of fighting the past.

Margaret FORSTER Keeping the World Away (2006, 352 pages)

This engrossing, beautifully crafted novel follows the fictional adventures, over a hundred years, of an early 20th-century painting and the women whose lives it touches. It opens with bold, passionate Gwen, struggling to be an artist, leaving for Paris where she becomes Rodin's lover and paints a small, intimate picture of a quiet corner of her attic room...Then, there's Charlotte, a dreamy intellectual Edwardian girl, and Stella, Lucasta, Ailsa and finally young Gillian, who share an unspoken desire to have for themselves a tranquil golden place like that in the painting.

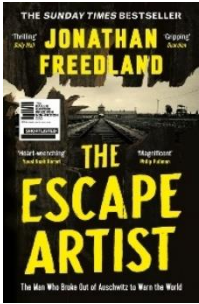
Tom FORT

The village news: the truth behind England's rural idyll (Non-Fiction) (2017, 392 pages)



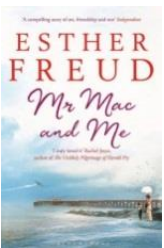
We have lived in villages a long time. The village was the first model for communal living. Towns came much later, then cities. Later still came suburbs, neighbourhoods, townships, communes, kibbutzes. But the village has endured. Across England, modernity creeps up to the boundaries of many, breaking the connection the village has with the land. With others, they can be as quiet as the graveyard as their housing is bought up by city 'weekenders', or commuters. The ideal chocolate box image many holidaying to England have in their minds eye may be true in some cases, but across the country the heartbeat of the real English village is still beating strongly – if you can find it. To this mission historian and travel writer Tom Fort willingly gets on his trusty bicycle and covers the length and breadth of England to discover the essence of village life. His journeys will travel over six thousand years of communal existence for the peoples that eventually became the English. Littered between the historical analysis, will be personal memories from Tom of the village life he remembers and enjoys today in rural Oxfordshire.

Jonathan FREEDLAND – *The Escape Artist* (2022, 388 pages) NF



In April 1944 a teenager named Rudolf Vrba was planning a daring and unprecedented escape from Auschwitz. After hiding in a pile of timber planks for three days while 3000 SS men and their bloodhounds searched for him, Vrba and his fellow escapee Fred Wetzler would eventually cross Nazi-occupied Poland on foot, as penniless fugitives. Their mission: to tell the world the truth of the Final Solution. A thrilling history with enormous historical implications, 'The Escape Artist' tells the extraordinary story of a complex man who would seek escape again and again: first from Auschwitz, then from his past, even from his own name. **Shortlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize**

Esther FREUD *Mr Mac and me* (2014, 296 pages)



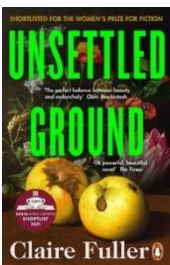
It is 1914, and Thomas Maggs, the son of the local publican, lives with his parents and sister in a village on the Suffolk coast. He is the youngest child, and the only son surviving. Life is quiet - shaped by the seasons, fishing and farming, the summer visitors, and the girls who come down from the Highlands every year to gut and pack the herring. Then one day a mysterious Scotsman arrives. To Thomas he looks for all the world like a detective. But Mac isn't a detective, he's the architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and together with his red haired artist wife, they soon become a source of fascination and wonder to Thomas. Yet just as Thomas and Mac's friendship begins to blossom, war with Germany is declared.

Robert FROST *Collected poems* (2013, 640 pages)



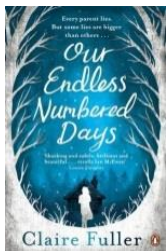
Hailed as 'the most eminent, the most distinguished Anglo-American poet' by T.S. Eliot, Frost is the only writer in history to have been awarded four Pulitzer Prizes. In iconic poems like 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening', simple images summon the rural landscape of New England, and Frost unfailingly moves the reader with his profound grasp of the human condition. This is the most comprehensive and authoritative volume of Frost's verse available, comprising all eleven volumes of his poems, meticulously edited by Edward Connery Lathem.

Claire FULLER *Unsettled Ground* (2021, 286 pages)



Twins Jeanie and Julius have always been different from other people. At 51 years old, they still live with their mother, Dot, in rural isolation and poverty. Inside the walls of their old cottage they make music, and in the garden they grow everything they need for sustenance. But when Dot dies suddenly, threats to their livelihood start raining down. Jeanie and Julius would do anything to preserve their small sanctuary against the perils of the outside world, even as their mother's secrets begin to unravel, putting everything they thought they knew about their lives at stake. Costa Novel Award Winner

Claire FULLER **Our endless numbered days** (2015, 304 pages)



1976: Peggy Hillcoat is eight. She spends her summer camping with her father, playing her beloved record of *The Railway Children* and listening to her mother's grand piano, but her pretty life is about to change. Her survivalist father, who has been stockpiling provisions for the end which is surely coming soon, takes her from London to a cabin in a remote European forest. There he tells Peggy the rest of the world has disappeared. Her life is reduced to a piano which makes music but no sound, a forest where all that grows is a means of survival. And a tiny wooden hut that is Everything. *Winner of the Desmond Elliott prize in 2015.*

Neil GAIMAN **The Ocean at the end of the lane** (2013, 240 pages)



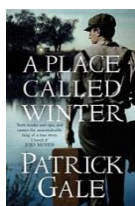
It began for our narrator forty years ago when the family lodger stole their car and committed suicide in it, stirring up ancient powers best left undisturbed. Dark creatures from beyond the world are on the loose, and it will take everything our narrator has just to stay alive. There is primal horror here, and menace unleashed - within his family and from the forces that have gathered to destroy it. His only defense is three women, on a farm at the end of the lane.

The youngest of them claims that her duckpond is an ocean. The oldest can remember the Big Bang. A novel of memory and the adventure of childhood. *Winner of the Specsavers National Book Awards 2013.*

Patrick GALE **Notes from an Exhibition** (2007, 304 pages)

When troubled artist Rachel Kelly dies painting obsessively in her studio in Penzance, her saintly husband and adult children have more than the usual mess to clear up. She leaves behind an extraordinary and acclaimed body of work -- but she also leaves a legacy of secrets and emotional damage it will take months to unravel. To her children she is both curse and blessing, though they all in one way or another reap her whirlwind, inheriting her waywardness, her power of loving -- and her demons! Only their father's Quaker gifts of stillness and resilience give them any chance of withstanding her destructive influence.

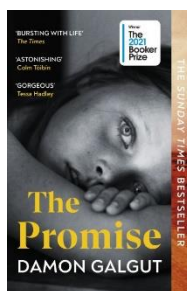
Patrick GALE **A place called Winter** (2015, 354 pages)



A shy but privileged elder son, Harry Cane has followed convention at every step. Even the beginnings of an illicit, dangerous affair do little to shake the foundations of his muted existence - until the shock of discovery and the threat of arrest force him to abandon his wife and child and sign up for emigration to Canada. Remote and unforgiving, his allotted homestead in a place called Winter is a world away from the golden suburbs of turn-of-the-century Edwardian England. And yet it is

here, isolated in a seemingly harsh landscape, under the threat of war and madness that the fight for survival will reveal in Harry an inner strength and capacity for love beyond anything he has ever known before. *Shortlisted for the Costa Novel Award 2015.*

Damon GALGUT **The Promise** (2021, 293 pages)

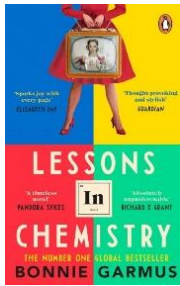


The many voices of 'The Promise' tell a story in four snapshots, each one centred on a family funeral, each one happening in a different decade. In the background, a different president is in power, and a different spirit hangs over the country, while in the foreground the family fights over what they call their farm, on a worthless piece of land outside Pretoria. Over large jumps in time, people get older, faces and laws and lives all change, while a brother and sister circle around a promise made long ago, and never kept. **(winner of the 2021 Booker Prize)**

Gabriel GARCIA MARQUEZ Love in the Time of Cholera (1985, 368 pages)

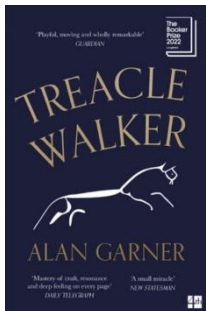
Fifty-one years nine months and four days have passed since Fermina Daza rebuffed hopeless romantic Florentino Arizo's impassioned advances and married Dr. Juvenal Urbino instead. During that half century, Florentino has fallen into the arms of many delighted women, but has loved none but Fermina. Having sworn his eternal love to her, he lives for the day when he can court her again. When Fermina's husband is killed trying to retrieve his pet parrot from a mango tree, Florentino seizes his chance to declare his enduring love. But can young love find new life in the twilight of their lives? *(translated from Spanish)*

Bonnie GARMUS – Lessons in Chemistry (2022, 390 pages)



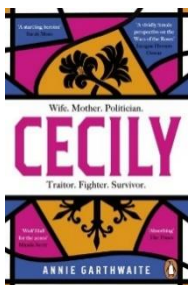
Chemist Elizabeth Zott is not your average woman. But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute take a very unscientific view of equality. Except for one: Calvin Evans, who falls in love with - of all things - her mind. True chemistry results. Like science, life is unpredictable. Which is why a few years later, Elizabeth Zott finds herself not only a single mother, but the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show, *Supper at Six*. Elizabeth's unusual approach to cooking ('combine one tablespoon acetic acid with a pinch of sodium chloride') proves revolutionary. But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because as it turns out, Elizabeth Zott isn't just teaching women to cook.

Alan GARNER – Treacle Walker (2021, 160 pages)



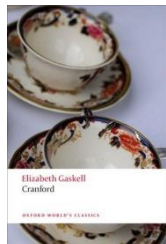
Joe Coppock squints at the world with his lazy eye. He reads his comics, collects birds' eggs and treasures his marbles, particularly his prized dobbers. When Treacle Walker appears off the Cheshire moor one day - a wanderer, a healer - an unlikely friendship is forged and the young boy is introduced to a world he could never have imagined. **Shortlisted for the Booker Prize**

Annie GARTHWAITE Cecily (2021, 373 pages)



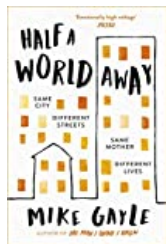
'Rebellion?' The word is a spark. They can start a fire with it, or smother it in their fingertips. She chooses to start a fire. You are born high, but marry a traitor's son. You bear him twelve children, carry his cause and bury his past. You play the game, against enemies who wish you ashes. Slowly, you rise. You are Cecily. But when the King who governs you proves unfit, what then? Loyalty or treason - death may follow both. The board is set. Time to make your first move. Told through the eyes of its greatest unknown protagonist, this debut plunges you into the blood and exhilaration of the first days of the Wars of the Roses, a war as women fight it.

Elizabeth GASKELL Cranford (1920, 216 pages)



A portrait of the residents of an English country town in the mid nineteenth century, *Cranford* relates the adventures of Miss Matty and Miss Deborah, two middle-aged spinster sisters striving to live with dignity in reduced circumstances. Through a series of vignettes, Elizabeth Gaskell portrays a community governed by old-fashioned habits and dominated by friendships between women.

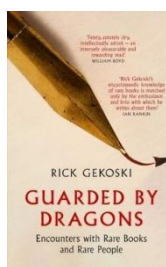
Mike GAYLE Half a world away (2019, 358 pages)



Kerry Hayes is single mum, living on a tough south London estate. She provides for her son by cleaning houses she could never afford. Taken into care as a child, Kerry cannot forget her past. Noah Martineau is a successful barrister with a beautiful wife, daughter and home in fashionable Primrose Hill. Adopted as a young child, Noah never looks back. When Kerry contacts Noah, the sibling she lost on the day they were torn apart as children, she sets in motion a chain of events that will change both of their lives forever. *A Richard and Judy Spring*

2020 choice

Rick GEKOSKI Guarded by Dragons NF (2021, 256 pages)

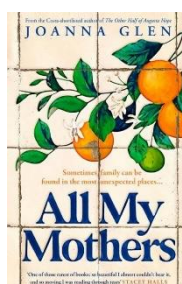


'Guarded by Dragons' follows rare book dealer Rick Gekoski as he uncovers the mysteries behind the most unusual manuscripts and archives he has handled, where stories are weaved within stories. From the original memoir of Dr Watson and his discovery of DNA to how Jeff Bezos improbably paid 2 million for a manuscript of J.K. Rowling's 'Beadle the Bard', Gekoski explores a world full of legacy and billionaires where priceless copies of Ulysses can vanish without a trace. In the world of literary dealership, a manuscript can tell a thousand stories.

Stella GIBBONS Cold Comfort Farm (1932, 233 pages)

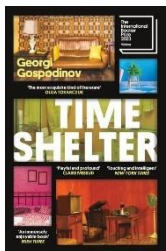
When sensible, sophisticated Flora Poste is orphaned at nineteen, she decides her only choice is to descend upon relatives in deepest Sussex. At the aptly named Cold Comfort Farm, she meets the doomed Starkadders: cousin Judith, heaving with remorse for unspoken wickedness; Amos, preaching fire and damnation; their sons, lustful Seth and despairing Reuben; child of nature Elfine; and crazed old Aunt Ada Doom, who has kept to her bedroom for the last twenty years. But Flora loves nothing better than to organize other people. Armed with common sense and a strong will, she resolves to take each of the family in hand.

Joanna GLEN All my Mothers (2021 471 pages)



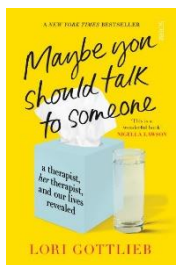
Between her emotionally absent mother and her physically absent father, Eva is convinced that all is not as it seems. Why are there no baby pictures of her? Why do her parents avoid all questions about her early years? When her parents' relationship crumbles, Eva begins a journey to find these answers for herself. Along the way, she meets women who challenge her idea of what a mother should be, and who will change her life forever.

Georgi GOSPODINOV– Time Shelter (2022, 302 pages)



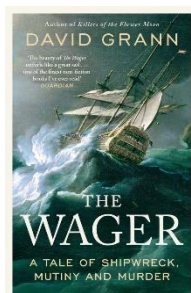
In 'Time Shelter', an unnamed narrator meets Gaustine, a 'flaneur through time,' who is the mind behind the first 'clinic for the past,' an institution based in Zurich that offers an inspired treatment for Alzheimer's sufferers: each floor reproduces a past decade in minute detail, allowing patients to transport themselves back in time and find comfort in their fading memories. Yet an increasing number of healthy people are interested in seeking out the clinic as a form of 'time shelter,' hoping to escape from the horrors of our present, a development that results in an unexpected conundrum, when the past beings to invade the present. **Winner of the International Booker Prize.**

Lori GOTTLIEB Maybe you should talk to someone NF (2019, 448 pages)



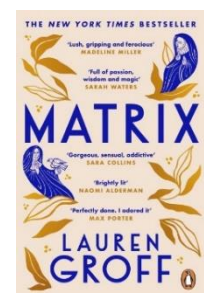
Meet Lori Gottlieb, an insightful and compassionate therapist whose clients present with all kinds of problems. Over the course of a year, they all make progress. But Gottlieb is not just a therapist - she's also a patient who's on a journey of her own. Interspersed with the stories of her clients are her own therapy sessions, as she goes in search of the hidden roots of a devastating and life-changing event. **Librarian recommended**

David GRANN The Wager (2023, 329 pages Non Fiction)



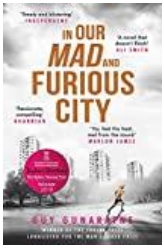
On 28th January 1742, a ramshackle vessel of patched-together wood and cloth washed up on the coast of Brazil. Inside were 30 emaciated men, barely alive, and they had an extraordinary tale to tell. They were survivors of His Majesty's ship The Wager, a British vessel that had left England in 1740 on a secret mission during an imperial war with Spain. While chasing a Spanish treasure-filled galleon, The Wager was wrecked on a desolate island off the coast of Patagonia. The crew, marooned for months and facing starvation, built the flimsy craft and sailed for more than 100 days, traversing 2500 miles of storm-wracked seas. They were greeted as heroes. Then, six months later, another, even more decrepit, craft landed on the coast of Chile. This boat contained just three castaways and they had a very different story to tell.

Lauren GROFF Matrix (2021, 266 pages)



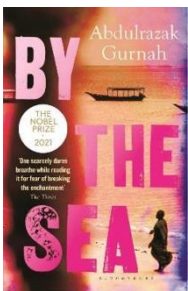
Seventeen-year-old Marie, too wild for courtly life, is thrown to the dogs one winter morning, expelled from the royal court to become the prioress of an abbey. At first taken aback by life at the abbey, Marie finds purpose and passion among her mercurial sisters. Yet she deeply misses her secret lover Cecily and queen Eleanor. Born last in a long line of women warriors and crusaders, Marie decides to chart a new course for the women she now leads and protects. She will bring herself, and her sisters, out of the darkness, into riches and power.

Guy GUNARATNE **In our mad and furious city** (2018, 295 pages)



For Selvon, Ardan, and Yusuf, growing up under the towers of Stones Estate, summer means what it does anywhere: football, music, and freedom, but now, after the killing of a British soldier, riots are spreading across the city, and nowhere is safe. While the fury swirls around them, Selvon and Ardan remain focused on their own obsessions, girls, and grime. Their friend Yusuf is caught up in a different tide, a wave of radicalism surging through his local mosque, threatening to carry his troubled brother, Irfan, with it.

Abdulrazak GURNAH **By the Sea** (2002, 245 pages)



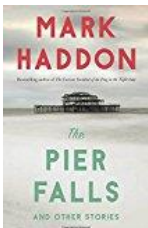
On a late November afternoon Saleh Omar arrives at Gatwick Airport from Zanzibar, a far away island in the Indian Ocean. With him he has a small bag in which lies his most precious possession - a mahogany box containing incense. He used to own a furniture shop, have a house and be a husband and father. Now he is an asylum seeker from paradise; silence his only protection. Meanwhile Latif Mahmud, someone intimately connected with Saleh's past, lives quietly alone in his London flat. When Saleh and Latif meet in an English seaside town, a story is unravelled. It is a story of love and betrayal, seduction and possession, and of a people desperately trying to find stability amidst the maelstrom of their times. **Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature 2021**

Yaa GYASI **Homegoing** (2016, 305 pages)



Effia and Esi: two sisters with two very different destinies. One sold into slavery; one a slave trader's wife. The consequences of their fate reverberate through the generations that follow. Taking us from the Gold Coast of Africa to the cotton-picking plantations of Mississippi; from the missionary schools of Ghana to the dive bars of Harlem, spanning three continents and seven generations, Yaa Gyasi has written a miraculous novel - the intimate, gripping story of a brilliantly vivid cast of characters.

Mark HADDON **The Pier falls (Short stories)** (2016, 346 pages)



An expedition to Mars goes terribly wrong. A seaside pier collapses. A 30-stone man is confined to his living room. One woman is abandoned on a tiny island in the middle of the ocean. Another is saved from drowning. Two boys discover a gun in a shoebox, and a group of explorers find a cave of unimaginable size, deep in the Amazon jungle. The characters in this collection of stories are often isolated physically or estranged from their families, yet they yearn for connection. Together the stories become a meditation on the essential aloneness of the human condition.

Tessa HADLEY **Bad dreams (short stories)** (2017, 214 pages)



Two sisters quarrel over an inheritance and a new baby. A housekeeper caring for a helpless old man uncovers secrets from his past. A young girl accepts a lift in a car with a group of strangers. An old friend brings bad news to a dinner party. In these gripping and unsettling stories, the ordinary is made extraordinary and the real things that happen to people turn out to be every bit as mysterious as their dreams.

Matt HAIG

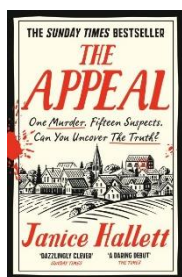
The Midnight Library (2020, 288 pages)



When Nora Seed finds herself in the Midnight Library, she has a chance to make things right. Up until now, her life has been full of misery and regret. She feels she has let everyone down, including herself. But things are about to change. The books in the Midnight Library enable Nora to live as if she had done things differently. With the help of an old friend, she can now undo every one of her regrets as she tries to work out her perfect life. But things aren't always what she imagined they'd be, and soon her choices place the library and herself in extreme danger. Before time runs out, she must answer the ultimate question: what is the best way to live? *A Richard and Judy Spring 2021 choice*

Janice HALLETT

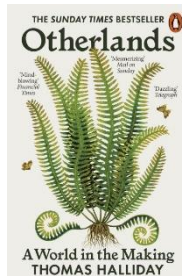
The Appeal (2021, 464 pages)



Dear Reader - enclosed are all the documents you need to solve a case. It starts with the arrival of two mysterious newcomers to the small town of Lockwood, and ends with a tragic death. Someone has already been convicted of this brutal murder and is currently in prison, but we suspect they are charity appeal for little Poppy Reswick's life-saving medical treatment, the murderer hid in plain sight. Yet we believe they gave themselves away. In writing. The evidence is all here, waiting to be discovered. Will you accept the challenge? Can you uncover the truth? **CWA Dagger Winner 2022**

Thomas HALLIDAY

Otherlands NF (2022, 416 pages)



What would it be like to visit the ancient landscapes of the past? To experience the Jurassic or Cambrian worlds, to wander among these other lands, as creatures extinct for millions of years roam? In this mesmerizing debut, the award-winning palaeontologist Thomas Halliday gives us a breath-taking up close encounter with worlds that are normally unimaginably distant. Journeying backwards in time from the most recent Ice Age to the dawn of complex life itself, and across all seven continents, Halliday immerses us in a series of extinct ecosystems, each one rendered with a novelist's eye for detail

and drama.

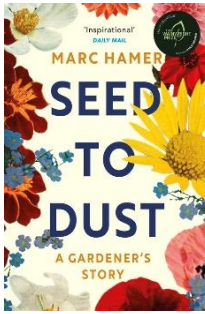
Stacey HALLS **The Familiars** (2019, 420 pages)

Young Fleetwood Shuttleworth, a noblewoman, is with child again. None of her previous pregnancies have borne fruit, and her husband, Richard, is anxious for an heir. Then Fleetwood discovers a hidden doctor's letter that carries a dire prediction: she will not survive another birth. By chance she meets a midwife named Alice Grey, who promises to help her deliver a healthy baby. But Alice soon stands accused of witchcraft.

Is there more to Alice than meets the eye? Fleetwood must risk everything to prove her innocence. As the two women's lives become intertwined, the Witch Trials of 1612 loom. Time is running out; both their lives are at stake. Only they know the truth. Only they can save each other. *A Richard and Judy Book Club choice for Autumn 2019*

Marc HAMER

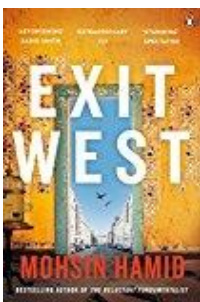
Seed to Dust (2021, 397 pages NF)



Marc Hamer has designed and nurtured 12 acres of garden for over two decades. It is rarely visited so he is the only person who fully knows its secrets; but it is not his own. His relationship with the garden's owner is both distant and curiously intimate, steeped in the mysterious connection which exists between two people who inhabit the same space in very different ways. In this life-enhancing book Marc takes us month-by-month through his experiences both working in the garden and outside it, as the seasons' changes bring new plants and wildlife to the fore and lead him to reflect on his past and future.

Mohsin HAMID

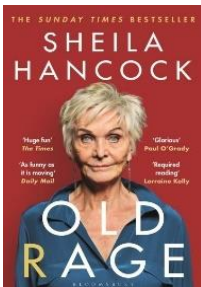
Exit west (2017, 228 pages)



In a country teetering on the brink of civil war, two young people meet - sensual, fiercely independent Nadia and gentle, restrained Saeed. They embark on a furtive love affair, and are soon cloistered in a premature intimacy by the unrest roiling their city. When it explodes, turning familiar streets into a patchwork of checkpoints and bomb blasts, they begin to hear whispers about doors - doors that can whisk people far away, if perilously and for a price. As the violence escalates, Nadia and Saeed decide that they no longer have a choice. Leaving their homeland and their old lives behind, they find a door and step through. . . . *Shortlisted for Man Booker*

prize 2017.

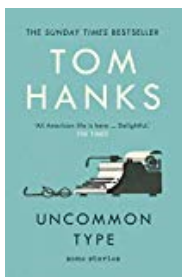
Sheila HANCOCK – Old Rage (NF 2022, 283 pages)



In 'Old Rage', one of Britain's best loved actors opens up about her ninth decade. Funny, feisty, honest, she makes for brilliant company as she talks about her life as a daughter, a sister, a mother, a widow, an actor, a friend and looks at a world so different from the wartime world of her childhood. And yet - despite age, despite rage - she finds there are always reasons for joy.

Tom HANKS

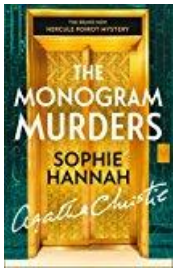
Uncommon type: some stories (Short stories) (2017, 405 pages)



A gentle Eastern European immigrant arrives in New York City after his family and his life have been torn apart by his country's civil war. A man who loves to bowl rolls a perfect game - and then another and then another and then many more in a row until he winds up ESPN's newest celebrity, and he must decide if the combination of perfection and celebrity has ruined the thing he loves. An eccentric billionaire and his faithful executive assistant venture into America looking for acquisitions and discover a down-and-out motel, romance and a bit of real life - just some of the tales Tom Hanks tells in this first collection of his

short stories.

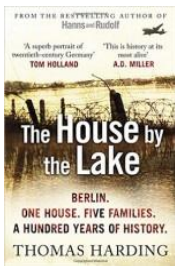
Sophie HANNAH The Monogram murders (2014, 272 pages)



For the first time, the guardians of Christie's legacy have approved a brand-new novel featuring Dame Agatha's most beloved creation.

Hercule Poirot's quiet supper in a London coffee house is interrupted when a young woman confides to him that she is about to be murdered. She is terrified, but begs Poirot not to find and punish her killer. Once she is dead, she insists, justice will have been done. Later that night, Poirot learns that three guests at a fashionable London hotel have been murdered, and a cufflink has been placed in each one's mouth. Could there be a connection with the frightened woman? While Poirot struggles to put together the bizarre pieces of the puzzle, the murderer prepares another hotel bedroom for a fourth victim....

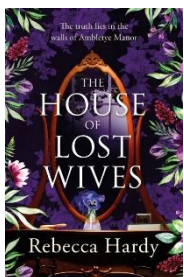
Thomas HARDING The House by the lake (Non-Fiction) (2015, 442 pages)



In 2013, Thomas Harding returned to his grandmother's house on the outskirts of Berlin which she had been forced to leave when the Nazis swept to power.

What was once her 'soul place' now stood empty and derelict. A concrete footpath cut through the garden, marking where the Berlin Wall had stood for nearly three decades. In a bid to save the house from demolition, Thomas began to unearth the history of the five families who had lived there. Discovering stories of domestic joy and contentment, of terrible grief and tragedy, and of a hatred handed down through the generations, a history of twentieth century Germany and the story of a nation emerged.

Rebecca HARDY The House of Lost Wives (2022, 352 pages)



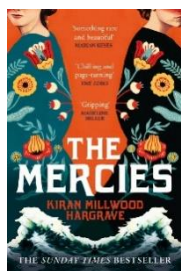
1813. Lizzie's beloved older sister Esme is sold in marriage to the aging Lord Blountford to settle their father's debts. One year later, Esme is dead, and Lizzie is sent to take her place as Lord Blountford's next wife. Arriving at Ambletye Manor, Lizzie uncovers a twisted web of secrets, not least that she is to be the fifth mistress of this house. Marisa. Anne. Pansy. Esme. What happened to the four wives who came before her?

Thomas HARDY The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886, 464 pages)



In a fit of drunken anger, Michael Henchard sells his wife and baby daughter for five guineas at a country fair. Over the course of the following years, he manages to establish himself as a respected and prosperous pillar of the community of Casterbridge, but behind his success there always lurk the shameful secret of his past and a personality prone to self-destructive pride and temper.

Kiran Millwood HARGRAVE The Mercies (2020, 341 pages)



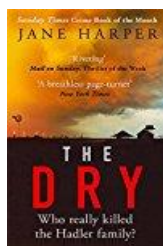
On Christmas Eve, 1617, the sea around the remote Norwegian island of Vardo is thrown into a reckless storm. The menfolk of Vardo wiped out in an instant. Now the women must fend for themselves. Eighteen months later, a sinister figure arrives. Summoned from Scotland to take control of a place at the edge of the civilised world, Absalom Cornet knows what he needs to do to bring the women of Vardo to heel. With him travels his young wife, Ursa who finds something she has never seen before: independent women. But Absalom sees only a place untouched by God and flooded with a mighty and terrible evil, one he must root out at all costs.

Harriet HARMAN A woman's work (Non-Fiction) (2017, 408 pages)



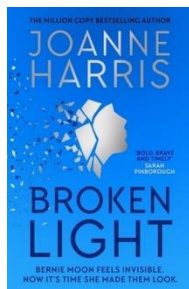
When Harriet Harman started her career, men-only job adverts and a 'women's rate' of pay were the norm, female MPs were a tiny minority - a woman couldn't even sign for a mortgage. Harriet Harman, Britain's longest-serving female MP, looks at her own life to see how far we've come, and where we should go next. This is an account of the part she has played - from helping striking female factory workers to standing for election while pregnant, from her memories of her own mother to her success in reforming the law on maternity rights, childcare, domestic violence and getting more women into parliament.

Jane HARPER The Dry (2017, 401 pages)



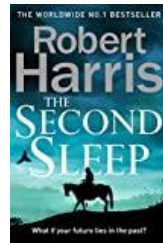
After getting a note demanding his presence, Federal Agent Aaron Falk arrives in his hometown for the first time in decades to attend the funeral of his best friend, Luke. Twenty years ago when Falk was accused of murder, Luke was his alibi. Falk and his father fled under a cloud of suspicion, saved from prosecution only because of Luke's steadfast claim that the boys had been together at the time of the crime. But now more than one person knows they didn't tell the truth back then, and Luke is dead. *Winner of the 2017 Gold Dagger award for the Best Crime Novel.*

Joanne HARRIS Broken Light (2023, 423 pages)



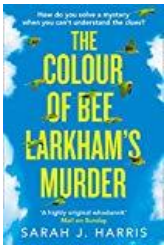
Bernie Moon's ambitions and dreams have been forgotten by everyone else - including Bernie herself. At 19 she was full of promise, but now facing 50 and going through the menopause, she's a fading light. Until the murder of a woman in a local park unlocks a series of childhood memories, and with them, a talent that she has hidden all her adult life. What happens when the frustrations and power of an older woman are finally given their chance to be revealed?

Robert HARRIS The Second Sleep (2019, 414 pages)



1468. A young priest, Christopher Fairfax, arrives in a remote Exmoor village to conduct the funeral of his predecessor. The land around is strewn with ancient artefacts – coins, fragments of glass, human bones – which the old parson used to collect. Did his obsession with the past lead to his death? As Fairfax is drawn more deeply into the isolated community, everything he believes – about himself, his faith and the history of his world – is tested to destruction. *A Richard and Judy Book Club choice for Summer 2020*

Sarah HARRIS The Colour of Bee Larkham's murder (2018, 437 pages)



Jasper is not ordinary. In fact, he would say he is extraordinary. Synaesthesia paints the sounds of his world in a kaleidoscope of colours that no one else can see. But on Friday, he discovered a new colour - the colour of murder. He's sure something has happened to his neighbour, Bee Larkham, but no-one else seems to be taking it as seriously as they should be. The knife and the screams are all mixed up in his head and he's scared that he can't quite remember anything clearly. But where is Bee? Why hasn't she come home yet?

A Richard and Judy Winter 2019 book club choice

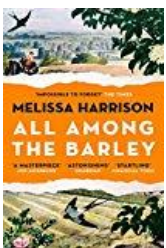
Melissa HARRISON At hawthorn time (2015, 278 pages)



Howard and Kitty have recently moved to Lodeshill after a life spent in London; now, their marriage is wordlessly falling apart. Custom car enthusiast Jamie has lived in the village for all of his nineteen years and dreams of leaving it behind, while Jack, a vagrant farm-worker and mystic in flight from a bail hostel, arrives in the village on foot one spring morning, bringing change. All four of them are struggling to find a life in the modern countryside; all are trying to find ways to

belong. Building to an extraordinary climax over the course of one spring month, *At Hawthorn Time* is both a clear-eyed picture of rural Britain, and an exploration of love, land and loss. *Shortlisted for the Costa Novel Award 2015, and Longlisted for the Bailey's Prize 2016.*

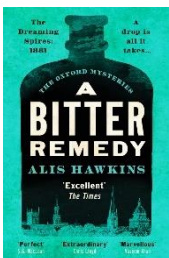
Melissa HARRISON All among the barley (2018, 352 pages)



The autumn of 1933 is the most beautiful Edie Mather can remember, although the Great War still casts its shadow over the fields and villages around her beloved home, Wych Farm. Constance FitzAllen arrives from London to document fading rural traditions and beliefs. For Edie, who must soon face the unsettling pressures of adulthood, the glamorous and worldly outsider appears to be a godsend. But there is more to the older woman than meets the eye. As harvest time approaches and pressures mount on the entire community, Edie

must find a way to trust her instincts and save herself from disaster.

Alis HAWKINS A Bitter Remedy (2023, 379 pages)

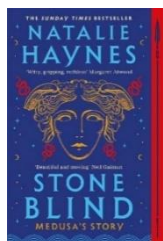


Jesus College, Oxford, 1881. An undergraduate is found dead at his lodgings. When the young man's guardian blames the college for his death and threatens a scandal, Basil Rice, a Jesus college fellow with a secret to hide, is forced to act and finds himself drawn into Sidney Parker's sad life. The mystery soon attracts the attention of Rhiannon 'Non' Vaughan, a young Welsh polymath and one of the young women newly admitted to university lectures. But when neither the college principal nor the powerful ladies behind Oxford's new female halls will allow her to become involved, Non's fierce intelligence and determination to prove herself drive her on. Both misfits at the university, Non and Basil form an unlikely partnership, and it soon falls to them to investigate the mysterious circumstances of Parker's death.

Elizabeth HAYNES Human Remains (2013, 402 pages)

When Annabel, a police analyst, discovers her neighbour's decomposing body in the house next door, she's appalled to think that no one, including herself, noticed that anything was wrong. Back at work, she feels compelled to investigate, despite her colleagues' lack of interest, and finds data showing that such cases are common – too common – in her home town. As she's drawn deeper into the mystery and becomes convinced she's on the trail of a killer, she also must face her own demons and her own mortality. Would anyone notice if she just disappeared? This is a dark psychological thriller, using multiple characters to tell the story.

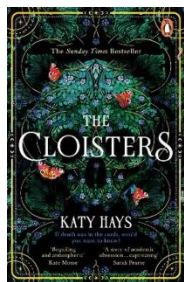
Natalie HAYNES Stone Blind (2022, 370 pages)



Growing up with her sisters, Medusa realises that she is the only one who gets older. Her mortal lifespan gives her an urgency that her family will never know. When, in Athene's temple, desire pushes Poseidon to commit the unforgivable, Medusa's mortal life is changed forever. Athene, furious at the sacrilege committed, directs her revenge on Medusa and she is turned into a Gorgon with a gaze that will turn any living creature to stone. Medusa condemns herself to a life of solitude until Perseus embarks upon a fateful quest to fetch the head of a

Gorgon. **Longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction**

Katy HAYS The Cloisters (2022, 416 pages)

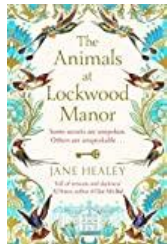


Ann Stilwell arrives in New York City, hoping to spend her summer working at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Instead, she is assigned to The Cloisters, a gothic museum and garden renowned for its collection of medieval and Renaissance art. There she is drawn into a small circle of charismatic but enigmatic researchers, each with their own secrets and desires, including the museum's curator, Patrick Roland, who is convinced that the history of Tarot holds the key to unlocking contemporary fortune telling. Ann is only too happy to indulge some of Patrick's more outlandish theories. But when Ann discovers a mysterious, once-thought lost deck of 15th-century Italian tarot cards she suddenly finds herself at the centre of a dangerous game of power, toxic friendship and ambition.

Emma HEALEY Elizabeth is Missing (2015, 288 pages)

Maud is forgetful. She makes a cup of tea and doesn't remember to drink it. She goes to the shops and forgets why she went. Sometimes her home is unrecognizable - or her daughter Helen seems a total stranger. But there's one thing Maud is sure of: her friend Elizabeth is missing. The note in her pocket tells her so. And no matter who tells her to stop going on about it, to leave it alone, to shut up, Maud will get to the bottom of it. Because somewhere in Maud's damaged mind lies the answer to an unsolved seventy-year-old mystery. One everyone has forgotten about. Everyone, except Maud . . .

Jane HEALEY The Animals at Lockwood Manor (2020, 336 pages)



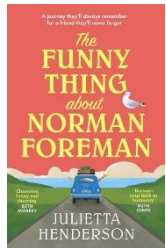
As the Second World War looms, thirty-year-old Hetty Cartwright is tasked with the evacuation and safekeeping of the natural history museum's famous collection of mammals. When a series of mysterious events occur, Hetty begins to suspect someone – or something – is stalking her through the corridors of the gothic mansion. As her fears build, Hetty finds herself falling under the spell of Lucy, Lord Lockwood's beautiful but haunted daughter. But why *is* Lucy so traumatized?

Ernest HEMINGWAY The Old man and the sea ([1952] 1993, 112 pages)



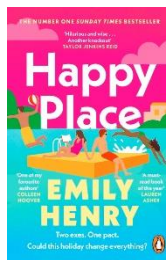
It is the story of an old Cuban fisherman and his supreme ordeal: a relentless, agonizing battle with a giant marlin far out in the Gulf Stream. Using the simple, powerful language of a fable, Hemingway takes the timeless themes of courage in the face of defeat and personal triumph won from loss and transforms them into a magnificent twentieth-century classic.

Julietta HENDERSON The Funny Thing about Norman Foreman (2021, 355 pages)



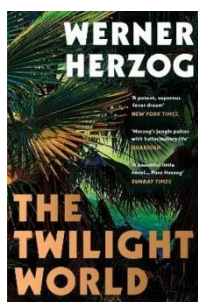
Norman and Jax were a legendary comedic duo in waiting. They had a plan to take them all the way to the Edinburgh Fringe in just 5 years' time. But when Jax dies before they turn twelve, Norman decides a tribute act for his best friend just can't wait - so he rewrites their plan: 1. Look after mum 2. Find Dad 3. Get to the Edinburgh Fringe. Sadie won't win a mother of the year award anytime soon. But if performing at the Fringe and finding his dad is what will help Norman through, they're going to make it happen.

Emily HENRY Happy Place (2023, 388 pages)



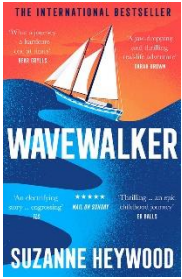
Harriet and Wyn are the perfect couple - they go together like bread and butter. Every year for the past decade they run away from their lives to drink far too much wine and soak up the sea air with their favourite people in the world. Except this year, they are lying through their teeth. Harriet and Wyn broke up six months ago. And they still haven't told anyone. They'll fake it for one more week. But how can you pretend to be in love in front of the people who know you best?

Werner HERZOG – The Twilight World (2022, 144 pages)



At the end of 1944, on Lubang Island in the Philippines, Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda was given orders by his superior officer: Hold the island until the Imperial army's return. You are to defend its territory at all costs. You are forbidden to die by your own hand. In the event of your capture by the enemy, you are to give them all the misleading information you can. So began Onoda's long campaign, during which he became fluent in the hidden language of the jungle. Soon weeks turned into months, months into years, and years into decades - all the while Onoda continued to fight his fictitious war, at once surreal and tragic, at first with other soldiers, and then, finally, alone, a character in a novel of his own making.

Susanne HEYWOOD Wavewalker (2023, 397 pages Non Fiction)

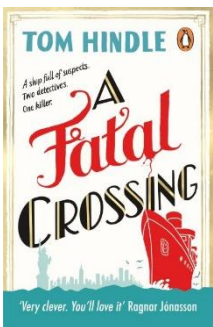


Aged just seven, Suzanne Heywood set sail with her family on a three-year voyage around the world. What followed turned instead into a decade-long way of life, through storms, shipwrecks, reefs and isolation, with little formal schooling. Suzanne fought her parents, longing to return to England and to education and stability. This memoir covers her astonishing upbringing, a survival story of a child in dire circumstances deprived of safety, friendships, schooling, occasionally drinking water.

Susan HILL The Beacon (2009, 160 pages)

The Prime children Colin, May, Frank and Berenice grew up in a bleak country farm house called The Beacon. Colin and Berenice married locally and May went to university in London, but came home within a year and never left again. Only Frank, quiet, watchful Frank, got away. He left for Fleet Street and a career in journalism but it is the publication of a book about his childhood that brings the fame and money he craves - and tears his family apart. This is a story of betrayal and revenge, but also of a life left unfulfilled, the untold memories and secrets that could be present in any family's past, and the human capacity to corrupt and manipulate.

Tom HINDLE – A Fatal Crossing (2022, 400 pages)



November 1924. The Endeavour sets sail from Southampton carrying 2,000 passengers and crew on a voyage to New York. When an elderly gentleman is found dead at the foot of a staircase, ship's officer Timothy Birch is ready to declare it a tragic accident. But James Temple, is certain there is more to this than meets the eye. Birch agrees to investigate, and the trail quickly leads to the theft of a priceless painting. With days remaining until they reach New York, and Temple's purpose on board proving increasingly suspicious, Birch's search for the culprit is fraught with danger.

Victoria HISLOP The Return (2008, 480 pages)

Beneath the Alhambra, Granada's cobbled streets resonate with music and secrets. Sonia Cameron knows nothing of the city's shocking past; she is here to dance. But in a quiet cafe, a chance conversation and an intriguing collection of old photographs draw her into the extraordinary tale of Spain's devastating civil war. Seventy years earlier, the cafe is home to the close-knit Ramirez family. In 1936, an army coup led by Franco shatters the country's fragile peace, and in the heart of Granada the family witnesses the worst atrocities of conflict.

Faith HOGAN The Ladies Midnight Swimming Club (2021, 322 pages)



When Elizabeth's husband dies, leaving her with crippling debt, the only person she can turn to is her friend, Jo. Soon Jo has called in her daughter, Lucy, to help save Elizabeth from bankruptcy. As life slowly begins to return to normal, these three women become fast friends. But then Jo receives some shocking news. In search of solace, Jo and Elizabeth find themselves enjoying midnight dips in the freezing Irish Sea. Here they can laugh, cry and wash away all their fears. As well as conjure a fundraising plan for the local hospice that will bring the whole community together.

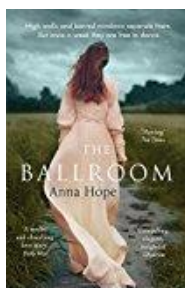
Gail HONEYMAN **Eleanor Oliphant is completely fine** (2017, 385 pages)



Meet Eleanor Oliphant: She struggles with appropriate social skills and tends to say exactly what she's thinking. Nothing is missing in her carefully timetabled life of avoiding social interactions, where weekends are punctuated by frozen pizza, vodka, and phone chats with Mummy. But everything changes when Eleanor meets Raymond, the bumbling and deeply unhygienic IT guy from her office. When she and Raymond together save Sammy, an elderly gentleman who has fallen on the sidewalk, the three become the kinds of friends who rescue one another from the lives of isolation they have each been

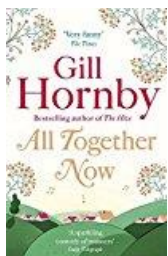
living. *Winner of the Costa First Novel Award 2017.*

Anna HOPE **The Ballroom** (2016, 298 pages)



1911: Inside an asylum at the edge of the Yorkshire moors, where men and women are kept apart by high walls and barred windows, there is a ballroom vast and beautiful. For one bright evening every week they come together and dance. When John and Ella meet it is a dance that will change two lives forever. Set over the heatwave summer of 1911, the end of the Edwardian era, *The Ballroom* is a tale of unlikely love and dangerous obsession, of madness and sanity, and of who gets to decide which is which. *A Richard and Judy Autumn 2016 book choice.*

Gill HORNBY **All together now** (2015, 325 pages)

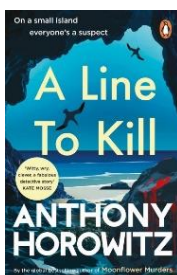


The Bridgeford Community Choir is in crisis. Numbers are down. The choir leader is in hospital. The tea urn is behaving in an ominous fashion. Something must be done. New joiners Tracey Leckford and Bennett Parker might just be able to save the day. But Tracey is hiding a huge secret about her past. And Bennett - while equipped with a beautiful singing voice - is entirely baffled by the world and everything in it. Can they really fit in with dependable old regulars like Annie? As the choir suffers through fights, feuds and the perils of the school fair, it becomes clear that their struggles are not just about music, but the future of their community. In order to save their singing group and their town, the Bridgeford Singers will have to find a way to work together - in harmony.

Anthony HOROWITZ **The House of Silk** (2012, 416 pages)

Brilliantly captures the spirit and tone of Conan Doyle's original stories while devising a new mystery for modern readers.

Anthony HOROWITZ **A Line to Kill** (2021, 375 pages)



There has never been a murder on Alderney. It's a tiny island, just three miles long and a mile and a half wide. The perfect location for a literary festival. Private Investigator Daniel Hawthorne has been invited to talk about his new book. The writer, Anthony Horowitz, travels with him. The visiting authors - including a blind medium, a French performance poet and a celebrity chef - seem to be harbouring any number of secrets. When the festival's sponsor is killed, Alderney goes into lockdown. The killer is still on the island. And there's about to be a second death.

Khaled HOSSEINI And the Mountains Echoed (2014, 480 pages)

Afghanistan, 1952. Abdullah and his sister Pari live with their father and stepmother in the small village of Shadbagh. Their father, Saboor, is constantly in search of work and they struggle together through poverty and brutal winters. To Abdullah, Pari - as beautiful and sweet-natured as the fairy for which she was named - is everything. More like a parent than a brother, Abdullah will do anything for her, even trading his only pair of shoes for a feather for her treasured collection. One day the siblings journey across the desert to Kabul with their father; Pari and Abdullah have no sense of the fate that awaits them there, for the event which unfolds will tear their lives apart; sometimes a finger must be cut to save the hand

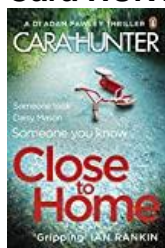
Elizabeth Jane HOWARD Falling (1999, 430 pages)



Henry Kent -- a man looking for a woman --- preferably one with a little money....

Henry, in late middle age, is living without means on a dank houseboat. Getting by on his charm is no longer feasible and when writer Daisy Langrish buys a cottage close by, he sets his sights on her. But those around Daisy --- her agent, her daughter -- begin to ask questions about him. And the revelations they uncover have them very worried indeed.

Cara HUNTER Close to home (2017, 379 pages)



Last night, 8-year-old Daisy Mason disappeared from her parents' summer party. No one in the quiet suburban street saw anything - or at least that's what they're saying. DI Adam Fawley is trying to keep an open mind. But he knows that nine times out of ten, it's someone the victim knew. That means someone is lying. And that Daisy's time is running out.

Catharina INGLEMAN-SUNDBERG The Little Old Lady who Broke all the Rules (2014, 464 pages)

79-year-old Martha Andersson dreams of escaping her care home and robbing a bank. She has no intention of spending the rest of her days in an armchair and is determined to fund her way to a much more exciting lifestyle. Along with her four oldest friends - otherwise known as the League of Pensioners - Martha decides to rebel against all of the rules imposed upon them. Together, they cause uproar with their antics protesting against early bedtimes and plasticky meals. With the aid of their Zimmer frames, they resolve to stand up for old aged pensioners everywhere - Robin Hood style. And that's when the adventure really takes off.. *(translated from Swedish)*

John IRVING The Fourth Hand (2001, 380 pages)



While reporting a story from India, a New York television journalist has his left hand eaten by a lion; millions of TV viewers witness the accident. In Boston, a renowned hand surgeon awaits the opportunity to perform the nation's first hand transplant. A married woman in Wisconsin wants to give the one-handed reporter her husband's left hand, that is, after her husband dies. But the husband is alive, relatively young, and healthy...

Kazuo ISHIGURO *The Buried Giant* (2015, 316 pages)



The Romans have long since departed, and Britain is steadily declining into ruin. But at last the wars that once ravaged the country have ceased. *The Buried Giant* begins as a couple, Axl and Beatrice, set off across a troubled land of mist and rain in the hope of finding a son they have not seen for years. They expect to face many hazards - some strange and other-worldly - but they cannot yet foresee how their journey will reveal to them dark and forgotten corners of their love for one another.

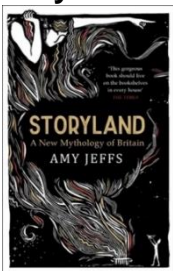
Kazuo ISHIGURO *Never Let Me Go* (2005, 282 pages)

A moving story of love, loss and hidden truths. Kathy, Ruth and Tommy were pupils at Hailsham, an idyllic establishment situated deep in the English countryside. The children there were tenderly sheltered from the outside world, brought up to believe they were special, and that their personal welfare was crucial. But for what reason were they really there? It is only years later that Kathy, now aged thirty-one, finally allows herself to yield to the pull of memory. What unfolds is the haunting story of how Kathy, Ruth and Tommy slowly come to face the truth about their seemingly happy childhoods – and about their futures.

P.D. JAMES *Death comes to Pemberley* (2012, 352 pages)

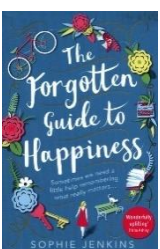
The year is 1803, and Darcy and Elizabeth have been married for six years. There are now two handsome and healthy sons in the nursery, Elizabeth's beloved sister Jane and her husband Bingley live nearby and the orderly world of Pemberley seems unassailable. But all this is threatened when, on the eve of the annual autumn ball, as the guests are preparing to retire for the night a chaise appears, rocking down the path from Pemberley's wild woodland. As it pulls up, Lydia Wickham - Elizabeth's younger, unreliable sister - stumbles out screaming that her husband has been murdered.

Amy JEFFS – *Storyland, a new mythology of Britain NF* (2021, 360 pages)



Soaked in mist and old magic, *Storyland* begins between the Creation and Noah's Flood and closes with the arrival of the Normans. These are retellings of medieval tales of legend, landscape and the yearning to belong, inhabited with characters now half-remembered: Brutus, Albina, Scota, Arthur and Bladud among them.

Sophie JENKINS *The Forgotten guide to happiness* (2018, 310 pages)



Sometimes, happiness can be found where you least expect it....

Twenty-eight-year-old Lana Green has never been good at making friends. She's perfectly happy to be left alone with her books. Or at least that's what she tells herself. Nancy Ellis Hall was once a celebrated writer. Now 80, she lives alone in her North London house and thinks she's doing just fine. But dementia is loosening Nancy's grip on the world. When Lana and Nancy become unconventional housemates, their lives will change in ways they never expected. But can an unusual friendship rescue two women who don't realise they need to be saved?

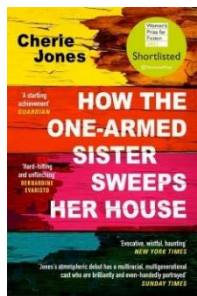
Jerome K. JEROME *Three Men in a Boat* (1889, 169 pages)

Is this the funniest book in the English language? Many people, over 100 years after publication, would say so. The bravura comic scenes are still hilarious "I had the general symptoms, the chief among them being a disinclination to work of any kind." So begin the hilarious misadventures of a merry, but scandalously lazy band of well-to-do young men – and a plucky and rather world-weary fox terrier named Montmorency – on an idyllic cruise along the River Thames. First published in 1889, *Three Men in a Boat* was an instant success, and Jerome has been compared to comic master P.G. Wodehouse.

Jonas JONASSON *The hundred-year-old man who climbed out of the window and disappeared* (2012, 120 pages)

It all starts on the one-hundredth birthday of Allan Karlsson. Sitting quietly in his room in an old people's home, he is waiting for the party he-never-wanted-anyway to begin. The mayor is going to be there. The press is going to be there. But, as it turns out, Allan is not...Slowly but surely Allan climbs out of his bedroom window, into the flowerbed (in his slippers) and makes his getaway. And so begins his picaresque and unlikely journey involving criminals, several murders, a suitcase full of cash, and incompetent police. As his escapades unfold, we learn something of Allan's earlier life, in which he helped to make the atom bomb, became friends with American presidents, Russian tyrants, and Chinese leaders. (*translated from Swedish*)

Cherie JONES *How the one-armed sister sweeps her house* (2020, 324 pages)



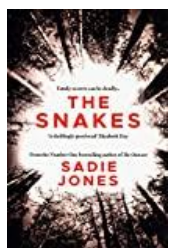
In Baxter's Beach, Barbados, Lala's grandmother Wilma tells the story of the one-armed sister, a cautionary tale about what happens to girls who disobey their mothers. For Wilma, it's the story of a wilful adventurer, who ignores the warnings of those around her, and suffers as a result. When Lala grows up, she sees it offers hope - after losing a baby and marrying the wrong man. And Mira? It's about keeping alive, trying to make sense of the fact that her husband has been murdered, and she didn't get the chance to tell him that she loved him after all. Shortlisted for the Womens' Prize for Fiction.

Ruth JONES *Us Three* (2020, 503 pages)



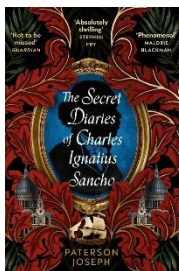
Meet Lana, Judith, and Catrin. Best friends since primary school when they swore an oath on a Curly Wurly wrapper that they would always be there for each other, come what may. After the trip of a lifetime, the three girls are closer than ever. But an unexpected turn of events shakes the foundation of their friendship to its core, leaving their future in doubt - there's simply too much to forgive, let alone forget. An innocent childhood promise they once made now seems impossible to keep. From the writer of TV's Gavin and Stacey.

Sadie JONES *The Snakes* (2019, 439 pages)



Newly-weds Dan and Bea decide to escape London. Driving through France in their beaten-up car they anticipate a long lazy summer, worlds away from their ordinary lives. But their idyll cannot last. Stopping off to see Bea's brother at his crumbling hotel, the trio are joined unexpectedly by Bea's ultra-wealthy parents. Dan has never understood Bea's deep discomfort around them but living together in such close proximity he begins to sense something is very wrong. Just as tensions reach breaking point, brutal tragedy strikes, exposing decades of secrets and silence that threaten to destroy them all. *A Richard and Judy Spring 2020 choice*

Paterson JOSEPH The Secret Diaries of Charles Ignatius Sancho (2022, 411 pages)

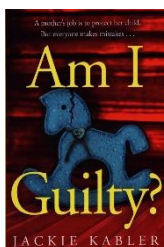


It's 1746 and Georgian London is not a safe place for a young Black man, especially one who has escaped slavery. After the twinkling lights in the Fleet Street coffee shops are blown out, Sancho must dodge slave catchers and worse. The man he hoped would help - a kindly duke who taught him to write - is dying. So how does Charles Ignatius Sancho meet the King, write and play highly acclaimed music, become the first Black person to vote in Britain and lead the fight to end slavery? **Longlisted for the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction**

Rachel JOYCE The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry (2012, 368 pages)

When Harold Fry nips out one morning to post a letter, leaving his wife hoovering upstairs, he has no idea that he is about to walk from one end of the country to the other. He has no hiking boots or map, let alone a compass, waterproof or mobile phone. All he knows is that he must keep walking to save someone else's life.

Jackie KABLER Am I guilty? (2019, 297 pages)



One moment I had it all - a gorgeous husband, a beautiful home, a fulfilling career and two adorable children. The next, everything came crashing down around me. They said it was my fault. They said I'm the worst mother in the world. And even though I can't remember what happened that day, they wouldn't lie to me. These are my friends, my family, people I trust. But then why do I have this creeping sensation that something is wrong? Why do I feel like people are keeping secrets? Am I really as guilty as they say? And if I'm not, what will happen when the truth comes out?

Toshikazu KAWAGUCHI Before the Coffee Gets Cold (2019, 213 pages)



In a small back alley in Tokyo, there is a coffee shop which offers its customers the chance to travel back in time. In this novel, we meet four visitors, each of whom is hoping to make use of the cafe's time-travelling offer. But the journey into the past does not come without risks: customers must sit in a particular seat, they cannot leave the cafe, and finally, they must return to the present before the coffee gets cold. Toshikazu Kawaguchi's beautiful, moving story explores the age-old question: what would you change if you could travel back in time?

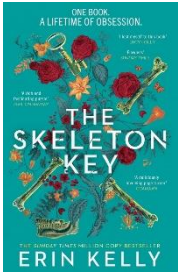
Claire KEEGAN – Small things like these (2021, 116p)



It is 1985, in an Irish town. During the weeks leading up to Christmas, Bill Furlong, a coal and timber merchant, faces into his busiest season. As he does the rounds, he feels the past rising up to meet him - and encounters the complicit silences of a people controlled by the Church. **Booker shortlisted.**

Erin KELLY

The Skeleton Key (2022, 497 pages)

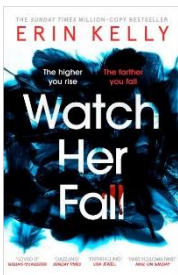


Fifty years ago, Nell's father wrote *The Golden Bones*. Part picture book, part treasure hunt, Sir Frank Churcher created a fairy story about Elinore, a murdered woman whose skeleton was scattered all over England. The book was a sensation. A community of treasure hunters called the Bonehunters formed, in frenzied competition, obsessed to a dangerous degree. People sold their homes to travel to England and search for Elinore. The book made Frank a rich man. Nell, became a recluse. Now the Churchers must be reunited. The book is being reissued along with a new treasure hunt and a documentary

crew are charting everything that follows.

Erin KELLY

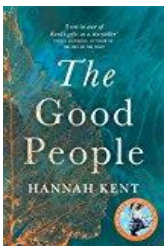
Watch her fall (2021, 391p)



Swan Lake is divided into the black acts and the white acts. The Prince is on stage for most of the ballet, but it's the swans audiences flock to see. Because of the faultless ballet technique required to master the steps, and the emotional range needed to perform both the virginal Odette and the dark, seductive Odile, this dual role is one of the most coveted in all ballet. Ava Kirilova has reached the top of her profession. After years and years of hard graft, pain and sacrifice as part of the London Russian Ballet Company, she is finally the poster girl for Swan Lake.

Hannah KENT

The Good people (2016, 385 pages)



Based on true events in nineteenth century Ireland, Hannah Kent's novel tells the story of three women, drawn together to rescue a child from a superstitious community. Nora, bereft after the death of her husband, finds herself alone and caring for her grandson Micheal, who can neither speak nor walk. A handmaid, Mary, arrives to help Nora just as rumours begin to spread that Micheal is a changeling child who is bringing bad luck to the valley. Determined to banish evil, Nora and Mary enlist the help of Nance, an elderly wanderer who

understands the magic of the old ways. *Shortlisted for the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction 2017.*

Sue Monk KIDD

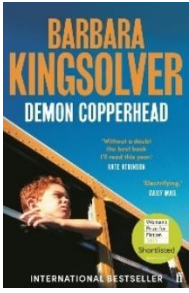
The Book of longings (2020, 418 pages)



Ana is a rebellious young woman, a gifted writer with a curious, brilliant mind, who writes secret narratives about the neglected and silenced women around her. Raised in a wealthy family in Galilee, she is sheltered from the brutality of Rome's occupation of Israel. Ana is expected to marry an elderly widower to further her father's ambitions, a prospect that horrifies her. A chance encounter with the eighteen-year-old Jesus changes everything: his ideas and his passion are intoxicating. Taking Ana on a journey she could never have imagined,

'The Book of Longings' is an evocation of a time and a place where astounding events unfolded, and of one woman's fate when she fights to make her voice heard.

Barbara KINGSOLVER – Demon Copperhead (2022, 548p)



Demon Copperhead is boy with no assets beyond his dead father's good looks and copper-coloured hair, bucket-loads of charm and a talent or two the world is yet to discover. Born to a teenaged single mother in a single wide trailer, life is not set fair for Demon as he escorts us on this, his journey through the modern perils of foster care, athletic success and addiction, the dizzying highs of true love, and the crushing losses that can accompany it. But Demon is a fighter, a survivor. **Winner of the Womens Prize for Fiction 2023**

Barbara KINGSOLVER Flight Behaviour (2013, 608 pages)

Dellarobia Turnbow steps out from her back door intent on wrecking her marriage. For ten years she has lived a humdrum existence on her husband's family farm. She is heading for a secret tryst with a young telephone engineer, but in small town Tennessee can anything be kept secret? On her way she is stopped in her tracks by a natural wonder, a valley of fire. She returns to her home, glad of the wake up call, and her narrow escape from infidelity.

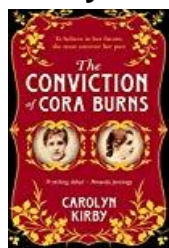
Barbara KINGSOLVER Unsheltered (2018, 524 pages)



together?

Meet Willa Knox, a woman who stands braced against a world which seems to hold little mercy for her and her family - or their old, crumbling house, falling down around them. Willa's two grown-up children, a new-born grandchild, and her ailing father-in-law have all moved in at a time when life seems at its most precarious. But when Willa discovers that a pioneering female scientist lived on the same street in the 1800s, could this historical connection be enough to save their home from ruin? And can Willa, despite the odds, keep her family

Carolyn KIRBY The Conviction of Cora Burns (2019, 347 pages)

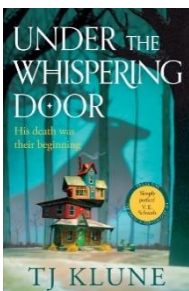


Birmingham, 1885.

Born in a gaol and raised in a workhouse, Cora Burns has always struggled to control the violence inside her. Haunted by memories of a terrible crime, she seeks a new life working as a servant in the house of scientist Thomas Jerwood. Here, Cora befriends a young girl, Violet, who seems to be the subject of a living experiment. But is Jerwood also secretly studying Cora...?

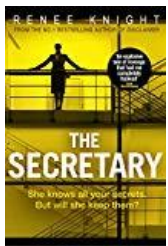
Written by a local south Oxfordshire author

T J KLUNE Under the Whispering Door (2022, 384p)



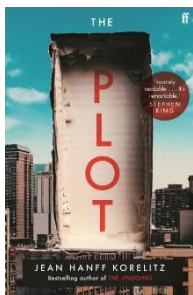
When a reaper comes to collect Wallace from his own sparsely-attended funeral, Wallace is outraged. Then when Hugo, owner of a most peculiar tea shop, promises to help him cross over, Wallace reluctantly accepts the truth. Yet even in death, he refuses to abandon his life - even though Wallace spent all of it working, correcting colleagues and hectoring employees. He'd had no time for frivolities like fun and friends. But as Wallace drinks tea with Hugo and talks to his customers, he wonders if he was missing something. So when he's given one week to pass through the door to the other side, Wallace sets about living a lifetime in just seven days.

Renee KNIGHT The Secretary (2019, 373 pages)



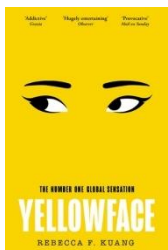
Look around you. Who holds the most power in the room? Is it the one who speaks loudest, who looks the part, who has the most money, who commands the most respect? Or perhaps it's someone like Christine Butcher: a meek, overlooked figure, who silently bears witness as information is shared and secrets are whispered. Someone who quietly, perhaps even unwittingly, gathers together knowledge of the people she's there to serve - the ones who don't notice her, the ones who consider themselves to be important. There's a fine line between loyalty and obsession. And when someone like Christine Butcher is pushed to her limit, she might just become the most dangerous person in the room . . .

Jean Hanff KORELITZ The Plot (2021, 322p)



When a young writer dies before completing his first novel, his teacher, Jake, helps himself to its plot. The book is a phenomenal success, but Jake worries: what if somebody out there knows? Somebody does. The plot, it transpires, is an actual person's actual story. The closer Jake gets to the real people he's fictionalised, the more violence he unearths; if he can't figure out who he's dealing with, he risks something far worse than the loss of his career.

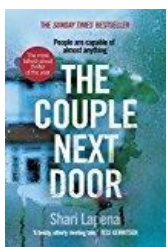
R F KUANG Yellowface (2023, 322 pages)



Athena Liu is a literary darling. Juniper Hayward is literally nobody. When Athena dies in a freak accident, Juniper steals her unpublished manuscript and publishes it as her own under the ambiguous name June Song. But as evidence threatens Juniper's stolen success, she will discover exactly how far she will go to keep what she thinks she deserves. What happens next is entirely everyone else's fault.

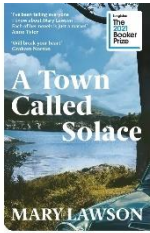
Winner of the British Book Awards

Shari LAPENA The Couple next door (2016, 343 pages)



Your neighbour told you that she didn't want your six-month-old daughter at the dinner party. Nothing personal, she just couldn't stand her crying. Your husband said it would be fine. After all, you only live next door. You'll have the baby monitor and you'll take it in turns to go back every half hour. Your daughter was sleeping when you checked on her last. But now, as you race up the stairs in your deathly quiet house, your worst fears are realized. She's gone.

Mary LAWSON Town called Solace (2021, 290 pages)



Clara's sister is missing. Angry, rebellious Rose, had a row with their mother, stormed out of the house and simply disappeared. Eight-year-old Clara, isolated by her distraught parents' efforts to protect her from the truth, is grief-stricken and bewildered. Liam Kane, newly divorced, newly unemployed, newly arrived in this small northern town, moves into the house next door, a house left to him by an old woman he can barely remember and within hours gets a visit from the police. At the end of her life Elizabeth Orchard is thinking about a crime too, one committed thirty years ago that had tragic consequences for two families. She desperately wants to make amends before she dies. **Longlisted for 2021 Booker Prize**

Doris LESSING Alfred and Emily (2008, 288 pages)

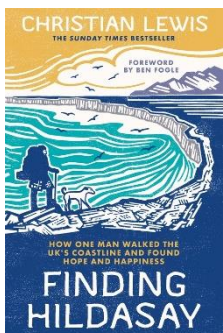
Here, Doris Lessing explores the lives of her parents, both of them irrevocably damaged by the Great War. Her father wanted the simple life of an English farmer, but shrapnel almost killed him in the trenches, and thereafter he had to wear a wooden leg. Her mother Emily's great love was a doctor who drowned in the Channel, and she spent the war nursing the wounded in the Royal Free Hospital.

Deborah LEVY Hot milk (2016, 208 pages)



Sofia, a young anthropologist, has spent much of her life trying to solve the mystery of her mother's unexplainable illness. She and her mother travel to the searing, arid coast of southern Spain to see a famous consultant--their very last chance--in the hope that he might cure her unpredictable limb paralysis. But Dr. Gomez has strange methods that seem to have little to do with physical medicine. and as the treatment progresses, Sofia's mother's illness becomes increasingly baffling. *Shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2016.*

Christian LEWIS Finding Hildasay (2023, 335 pages) – Non Fiction



Christian Lewis had hit rock bottom, suffering with depression so severe he would shut himself in his bedroom for weeks. In August 2017, he cast his eyes along the coastline and realised it was the only place he really wanted to be. With just a tenner in his pocket and two days' worth of food, little did he know just how long it would take to cross the finish line - and the encounters that lay ahead that would turn his life around. Five years later, he has walked the West Coast, Northern Ireland, the hard-rock cliffs of Scotland and the perimeters of the Scottish Islands. He spent three months on an uninhabited island called Hildasay, where there was no fresh water or food. Happiness and hope was just around the corner.

Sinclair LEWIS **It can't happen here** (1935, 400 pages)



It's 1935 and discontent is rife in America. From the political margins appears Buzz Windrip, charismatic presidential candidate and 'inspired gesser at what political doctrines the people would like'. Sweeping to power amid mass elation, he promises wealth for all and the dawn of a glorious new era. Small-town newspaper editor Doremus Jessop is worried, especially when the new regime becomes increasingly authoritarian. But what can one individual do to fight an all-powerful state? Sinclair Lewis's terrifying cautionary tale pits liberal complacency against popular fascism and shows: yes, it really can happen

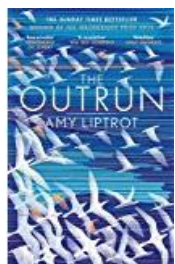
here. **First American to receive Nobel Prize for Literature.**

Joan Weigall LINDSAY **Picnic at Hanging Rock** (1968, 196 pages)



It was a cloudless summer day in the year 1900. Everyone at Appleyard College for Young Ladies agreed it was just right for a picnic at Hanging Rock. After lunch, a group of three of the girls climbed into the blaze of the afternoon sun, pressing on through the scrub into the shadows of Hanging Rock. Further, higher, till at last they disappeared. They never returned. Whether Picnic at Hanging Rock is fact or fiction the reader must decide for themselves.

Amy LIPTROT **The Outrun (Non-Fiction)** (2016, 304 pages)



At the age of thirty, Amy Liptrot finds herself washed up back home on Orkney. Standing unstable on the island, she tries to come to terms with the addiction that has swallowed the last decade of her life. As she spends her mornings swimming in the bracingly cold sea, her days tracking Orkney's wildlife, and her nights searching the sky for the Merry Dancers, Amy discovers how the wild can restore life and renew hope. *Winner of the 2016 Wainwright Prize and Shortlisted for the 2016 Wellcome Prize.*

Penelope LIVELY **Family Album** (2009, 272 pages)

Allersmead is a big shabby Victorian suburban house. The perfect place to grow up for elegant Sandra, difficult Gina, destructive Paul, considerate Katie, clever Roger and flighty Clare. But was it? As adults, the children return to Allersmead one by one. To their home-making mother and aloof writer father, and a house that for years has played silent witness to a family's secrets. And one devastating secret of which no one speaks...

Patricia LOCKWOOD **No-One is Talking About This** (2021, 210 pages)

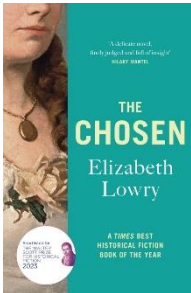


A woman known for her viral social media posts travels the world speaking to her adoring fans, her entire existence overwhelmed by the Internet - or what she terms 'the portal'. Suddenly, two texts from her mother pierce the fray: 'Something has gone wrong,' and 'How soon can you get here?' As real life and its stakes collide with the increasing absurdity of the portal, the woman confronts a world that seems to contain both an abundance of proof that there is goodness, empathy and justice in the universe, and a deluge of evidence to the contrary. Shortlisted for The Man Booker and Womens Prize.

David LODGE *A man of parts* (2012, 576 pages)

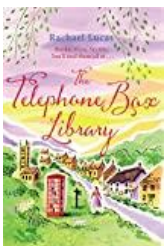
Sequestered in his blitz-battered Regent's Park house in 1944, the ailing Herbert George Wells, 'H.G.' to his family and friends, looks back on a life crowded with incident, books, and women. Charting his unpromising start as a draper's assistant to his rapid rise to fame as a writer with a prophetic imagination, his immersion in socialist politics and his belief in and practice of free love, *A Man of Parts* is an astonishing novel of passion, ambition and controversy.

Elizabeth LOWRY – *The Chosen* (2022, 296 pages)



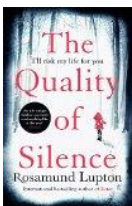
One Wednesday morning in November 1912 the ageing Thomas Hardy finds his wife Emma dying in her bedroom. Between his speaking to her and taking her in his arms, she has gone. The day before, he and Emma had exchanged bitter words - leading Hardy to wonder whether all husbands and wives end up as enemies to each other. This novel hauntingly searches the unknowable spaces between man and wife; memory and regret; life and art. **Shortlisted for The Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction 2023**

Rachael LUCAS *The Telephone box library* (2020, 390 pages)



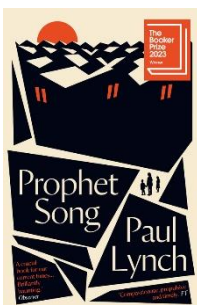
The Cotswolds: the perfect retreat for a stressed-out teacher. And Lucy has found just the right cottage for a bargain rent. All she has to do is keep an eye on Bunty, her extremely feisty 90-something neighbour.... With her West Highland terrier Hamish at her side, Lucy plans to relax and read up on the women of nearby Bletchley Park. But the villagers of Little Maudley have other ideas and she finds herself caught up in the campaign to turn a dilapidated telephone box into a volunteer-run library. Along the way, she makes friends with treehouse designer Sam and finds herself falling for the charms of village life. And it seems Bunty has a special connection to Bletchley and the telephone box, one that she's kept secret for decades....

Rosamund LUPTON *The Quality of silence* (2015, 394 pages)



The Quality of Silence is the story of Yasmin, a beautiful astrophysicist, and her precocious deaf daughter, Ruby, who arrive in a remote part of Alaska to be told that Ruby's father, Matt, has been the victim of a catastrophic accident. Unable to accept his death as truth, Yasmin and Ruby set out into the hostile winter of the Alaskan tundra in search of answers.

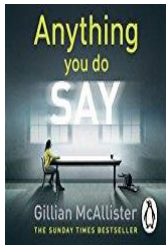
Paul LYNCH *The Prophet Song* (2023, 309 pages)



On a dark, Eilish Stack answers her front door to find the GNSB on her step. Two officers from Ireland's newly formed secret police are here to interrogate her husband, a trade unionist. The country is in the grip of a government turning towards tyranny and Eilish can only watch helplessly as the world she knew disappears. When first her husband and son vanish, Eilish finds herself caught within the nightmare logic of a collapsing society. How far will she go to save her family? And what - or who - is she willing to leave behind?

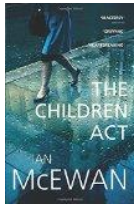
Winner of the 2023 Booker Prize

Gillian McALLISTER **Anything you do say** (2018, 388 pages)



Joanna is an avoider. So far she has spent her adult life hiding bank statements and changing career aspirations weekly. But then one night Joanna hears footsteps on the way home. Is she being followed? She is sure it's him; the man from the bar who wouldn't leave her alone. Hearing the steps speed up Joanna turns and pushes with all of her might, sending her pursuer tumbling down the steps and lying motionless on the floor. Now Joanna has to do the thing she hates most - make a decision. Fight or flight? Truth or lie? Right or wrong?

Ian McEWAN **The Children Act** (2014, 215 pages)

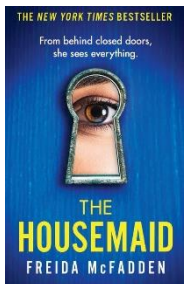


Fiona Maye, a leading High Court judge, renowned for her fierce intelligence and sensitivity is called on to try an urgent case. For religious reasons, a seventeen-year-old boy is refusing the medical treatment that could save his life. Time is running out. She visits the boy in hospital – an encounter which stirs long-buried feelings in her and powerful new emotions in the boy. But it is Fiona who must ultimately decide whether he lives or dies and her judgement will have momentous consequences for them both.

Ian McEWAN **Sweet tooth** (2013, 384 pages)

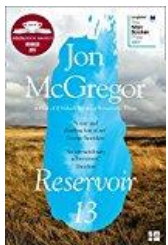
McEwan's latest novel charts the progress of Serena Frome from the seat of her father's bishopric, via a mathematics degree at Cambridge, to a junior role in MI5 during the 1970s. Much of the novel is taken up with her romantic engagements, professional disappointments and love of literature until all of them become bound together in a single operation, Sweet Tooth.

Freida MCFADDEN **The Housemaid** (2023, 331 pages)



Every day I clean the Winchesters' beautiful house top to bottom. I collect their daughter from school. And I cook a delicious meal for the whole family before heading up to eat alone in my tiny room on the top floor. Nina has a walk-in closet, the fancy car, the perfect husband. I only try on one of Nina's pristine white dresses once. But she soon finds out. By the time I realise my attic bedroom door only locks from the outside, it's far too late. But I reassure myself, the Winchesters don't know who I really am. They don't know what I'm capable of.

Jon McGREGOR **Reservoir 13** (2017, 326 pages)

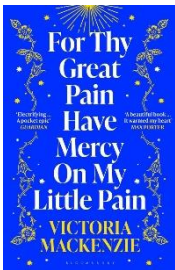


Midwinter in the early years of this century. A teenage girl on holiday has gone missing in the hills at the heart of England. The villagers are called up to join the search, fanning out across the moors as the police set up roadblocks and a crowd of news reporters descends on their usually quiet home. Meanwhile, there is work that must still be done: cows milked, fences repaired, stone cut, pints poured, beds made, sermons written, a pantomime rehearsed. The search for the missing girl goes on, but so does everyday life. As it must. *Winner of the Costa Novel of the Year 2017 and Longlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2017.*

Sinclair McKAY The Secret Life of Bletchley Park (Non-Fiction) (2011, 368 pages)

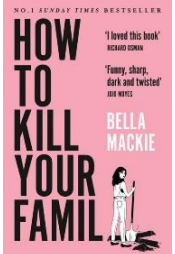
Though plenty has been written about the boffins, and the codebreaking, fictional and non-fiction – from Robert Harris and Ian McEwan to Andrew Hodges’ biography of Turing – what of the thousands of men and women who lived and worked at Bletchley Park during the war? What was life like for them – an odd, secret territory between the civilian and the military? This is the first history of life at Bletchley Park, and is an amazing compendium of memories from people now in their eighties – of skating on the frozen lake in the grounds (a depressed Angus Wilson, the novelist, once threw himself in) – of a youthful Roy Jenkins, useless at codebreaking, of the high jinks at nearby accommodation hostels – and of the implacable secrecy that meant girlfriend and boyfriend working in adjacent huts knew nothing about each other’s work.

Victoria MACKENZIE For thy great pain have mercy on my little pain (2023, 163 pages)



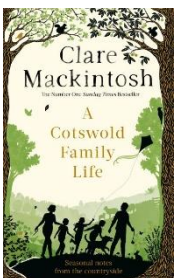
In the year of 1413, two women meet for the first time in the city of Norwich. Margery has left her fourteen children and husband behind to make her journey. Her visions of Christ - which have long alienated her from her family and neighbours, and incurred her husband's abuse - have placed her in danger with the men of the Church, who have begun to hound her as a heretic. Julian, an anchoress, has not left Norwich, nor the cell to which she has been confined, for twenty-three years. She has told no one of her own visions - and knows that time is running out for her to do so. The two women have stories to tell one another. Stories about girlhood, motherhood, sickness, loss, doubt and belief; revelations more the powerful than the world is ready to hear.

Bella MACKIE – How to kill your family (2021, 359 pages)



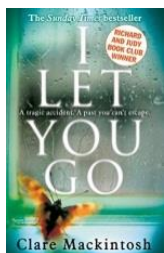
When Grace Bernard discovers her absentee millionaire father has rejected her dying mother's pleas for help, she vows revenge, and sets about to kill every member of his family. Readers have a front row seat as Grace picks off the family one by one - and the result is as gruesome as it is entertaining in this wickedly dark romp about class, family, love, and murder. But then Grace is imprisoned for a murder she didn't commit.

Claire MACKINTOSH – A Cotswold Life (NF 2019, 336 pages)



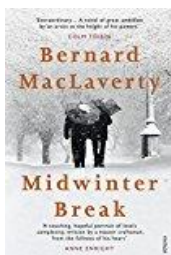
For eight years, Clare Mackintosh wrote for 'Cotswold Life' about the ups and downs of life with a young family in the countryside. In this memoir she brings together all of those stories - and more - for the first time. From keeping chickens to getting the WI drunk, longing for an Aga to dealing with nits, Clare opens the door to family life with warmth and humour and heart.

Clare MACKINTOSH I let you go (2014, 373 pages)



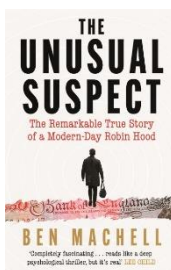
In a split second, Jenna Gray's world is shattered. Her only hope of moving on is to walk away from everything she knows to start afresh. Desperate to escape her past, Jenna moves to a remote cottage on the Welsh coast, but she is haunted by her fears, her grief and her memories of the cruel November night that changed her life for ever. DI Ray Stevens is tasked with seeking justice for a mother who is living every parent's worst nightmare. Determined to get to the bottom of the case, it begins to consume him as he puts both his professional and personal life on the line. *Richard and Judy Book Club choice in 2015.*

Bernard MACLAVERTY Midwinter break (2017, 242 pages)



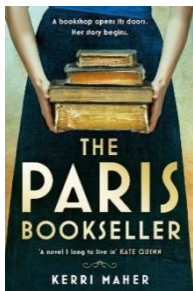
A retired couple, Gerry and Stella Gilmore, fly to Amsterdam for a midwinter break. A holiday to refresh the senses, to see the sights and to generally take stock of what remains of their lives. But amongst the wintry streets and icy canals we see their relationship fracturing beneath the surface. And when memories re-emerge of a troubled time in their native Ireland things begin to fall apart. As their midwinter break comes to an end, we understand how far apart they are - and can only watch as they struggle to save themselves. *Shortlisted for the Irish Novel of the Year 2018.*

Ben MACHELL The Unusual Suspect (2021, 314 pages NF)



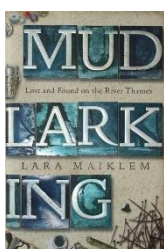
When the global financial crisis hit in 2007, Stephen Jackley became obsessed with the idea of Robin Hood. With no prior experience, he resolved to become a bank robber. He would steal from the rich and give to the poor. Against all likelihood, his plan actually worked. Jackley used disguise, elaborate escape routes and replica pistols to hold up a string of banks, making away with thousands of pounds. Bank notes marked with 'RH' - 'Robin Hood' - began finding their way into the hands of the homeless. The police, despite their concerted efforts, had no idea what was going on or who was responsible. That is until Jackley's ambition got the better of him.

Kerri MAHER The Paris Bookseller (2022, 319 pages)



Paris, 1919. Sylvia Beach opens an English-language bookshop on the bohemian Left Bank. Many leading writers of the day, from Ernest Hemingway to Gertrude Stein, consider Shakespeare and Company a second home. Here some of the most profound literary friendships blossom - and none more so than between James Joyce and Sylvia herself. When Joyce's controversial novel Ulysses is banned, Sylvia determines to publish it. But the success and notoriety of publishing the most infamous book of the century comes at deep personal cost as Sylvia risks ruin, reputation and her heart in the name of the life-changing power of books.

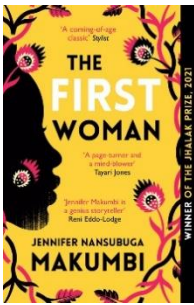
Lara MAIKLEM Mudlarking (Non-Fiction) (2019, 316 pages)



Lara Maiklem has scoured the banks of the Thames for over 15 years, in pursuit of the objects that the river unearths: from Neolithic flints to Roman hair pins, medieval buckles to Tudor buttons, Georgian clay pipes to Victorian toys. These objects tell her about London and its lost ways of life. Moving from the river's tidal origins in the west of the city to the point where it meets the sea in the east, *Mudlarking* is a search for urban solitude and history on the River Thames, what Lara calls 'the longest archaeological site in the world'.

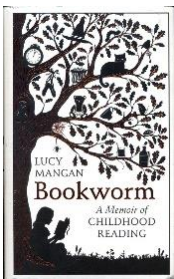
Jennifer MAKUMBI

The First Woman (2020, 437 pages)



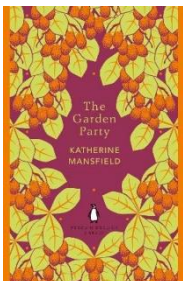
Smart, headstrong Kirabo is raised by her grandparents in rural Uganda. But as she enters her teens, she starts to feel overshadowed by the absence of the mother she has never known. At once epic and deeply personal, 'The First Woman' is the bold and piercing story of one young girl's discovery of what it means to be a woman in a family, a community and a country that seem determined to silence her. Winner of the Jhalak Prize

Lucy MANGAN Bookworm: a memoir of childhood reading (Non-Fiction) (2018, 321 pages)



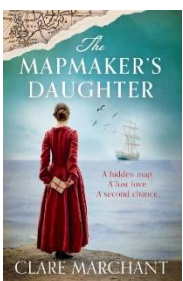
When Lucy Mangan was little, stories were everything. They opened up new worlds and cast light on all the complexities she encountered. In this book, Lucy revisits her childhood reading with wit, love and gratitude. She relives our best-loved books, their extraordinary creators, and looks at the thousand subtle ways they shape our lives. She also disinters a few forgotten treasures to inspire the next generation of bookworms and set them on their way. Lucy brings the favourite characters of our collective childhoods back to life - prompting endless re-readings, rediscoveries, and, inevitably, fierce debate - and brilliantly uses them to tell her own story, that of a born, and unrepentant, bookworm.

Katherine MANSFIELD The Garden Party (1921, 192 pages)



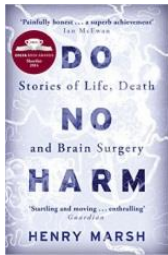
A windless, warm day greets the Sheridan family on the day of their garden party. As daughter Laura takes the reins on party preparations the news of a neighbour's demise casts a cloud over the host and threatens the entire celebration.

Clare MARCHANT The Mapmakers Daughter (2022, 366 pages)



Present day: When 36-year-old Robyn Willoughby discovers an exquisite yet blood-stained Tudor map in her father's antique map shop, desperate for a distraction from her problems, she decides to investigate. But as Robyn delves into the mystery, she finds herself caught up in a centuries-old secret - one that will change her life forever. 1569: Forced to flee Holland to escape persecution, 20-year-old Freida Ortelius uses her mapmaking skills to start anew in London. Soon her rare talent catches the eye of Queen Elizabeth, who demands Freida's help in fighting the Spanish threat. Freida must now embark on a deadly mission, the consequences of which will echo down the ages.

Henry MARSH Do no harm (Non-Fiction) (2014, 277 pages)



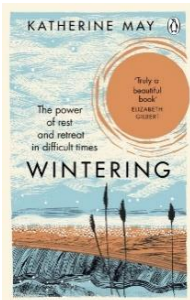
What is it like to be a brain surgeon? How does it feel to hold someone's life in your hands, to cut through the stuff that creates thought, feeling and reason? How do you live with the consequences when it all goes wrong? DO NO HARM offers an unforgettable insight into the highs and lows of a life dedicated to operating on the human brain, in all its exquisite complexity. With astonishing candour and compassion, Henry Marsh reveals the exhilarating drama of surgery, the chaos and confusion of a busy modern hospital.

Mark MASON Move along, please: Land's End to John O'Groats by bus (Non-Fiction) (2013, 311 pages)



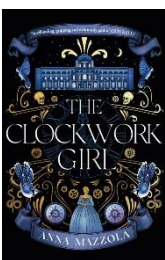
At 10.41am on a Tuesday morning in September, Mark Mason boards the number 1A bus at Land's End in Cornwall. Forty-six buses and eleven days later he disembarks at John O'Groats in Scotland. *Move Along Please* is his account of that gruelling 1100-mile odyssey; a paint-by-bus-numbers portrait of Britain. Along the way he visits everywhere from the village where the internet enters Britain to the urban sprawl of Birmingham. He samples staples of the British diet and uncovers countless fascinating facts about his native land.

Katherine MAY – Wintering (2020, 324 pages NF)



Wintering, the dark moments we endure - which can be brought about through myriad of ways; from the death of a loved one to a sudden change in circumstances or ill health - can be lonely, damaging and catch us off guard. Katherine May recounts her own year-long journey through winter, and how she found strength and inspiration when life felt frozen. Part memoir, part exploration of a human condition, 'Wintering' explores the healing nature of the great outdoors to help us overcome and embrace our own wintering experiences.

Anna MAZZOLA The Clockwork Girl (2022, 368 pages)



Paris, 1750. In the midst of winter, rumours are stirring that Reinhart's uncanny mechanical creations - bejewelled birds, silver spiders - are more than mere automata. That they might defy the laws of nature, perhaps even at the expense of the living. But Madeleine is hiding a dark past, and a dangerous purpose - to discover the truth of the clockmaker's experiments and record his every move, in exchange for her own chance of freedom. Meanwhile, in the streets, children are quietly disappearing - and Madeleine comes to fear that she has stumbled upon a greater conspiracy. One which might reach to the heart of Versailles.

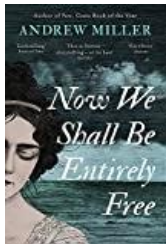
Charlotte Mendelson – *The Exhibitionist* (2022, 321 pages)



Meet the Hanrahan family, gathering for a momentous weekend as famous artist and notorious egoist Ray Hanrahan prepares for a new exhibition of his art - the first in many decades - and one he is sure will burnish his reputation for good. His three children will be there: beautiful Leah, always her father's biggest champion; sensitive Patrick, who has finally decided to strike out on his own; and insecure Jess, the youngest, who has her own momentous decision to make. And what of Lucia, Ray's steadfast and selfless wife? She is an artist, too, but has always had to put her roles as wife and mother first.

What will happen if she decides to change? For Lucia is hiding secrets of her own, and as the weekend unfolds and the exhibition approaches, she must finally make a choice.

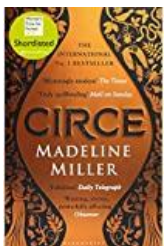
Andrew MILLER *Now we shall be entirely free* (2018, 422 pages)



One rainswept winter's night in 1809, an unconscious man is carried into a house in Somerset. He is Captain John Lacroix, home from Britain's disastrous campaign against Napoleon's forces in Spain. Gradually Lacroix recovers his health, but not his peace of mind. He will not - cannot - talk about the war or face the memory of what took place on the retreat to Corunna. After the command comes to return to his regiment, he lights out instead for the Hebrides, unaware that he has far worse to fear than being dragged back to the army: a vicious English corporal and a Spanish officer with secret orders are on his trail.

Waterstones Scottish Book of the Year 2019

Madeline MILLER *Circe* (2018, 336 pages)



In the house of Helios, god of the sun and mightiest of the Titans, a daughter is born. Circe is a strange child – not powerful and terrible, like her father, nor gorgeous and mercenary like her mother. Scorned and rejected, Circe grows up in the shadows, at home in neither the world of gods or mortals. But Circe has a dark power of her own: witchcraft. When her gift threatens the gods, she is banished to the island of Aiaia where she hones her occult craft, casting spells, gathering strange herbs and taming wild beasts. Yet a woman who stands alone

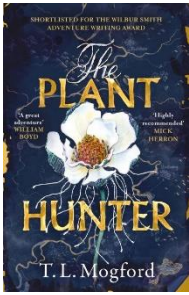
will never be left in peace for long – and among her island's guests is an unexpected visitor: the mortal Odysseus, for whom Circe will risk everything. *Shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction 2019*

David MITCHELL *Slade house* (2015, 240 pages)



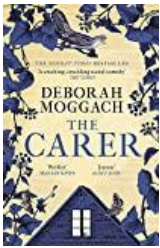
Turn down Slade Alley - narrow, dank and easy to miss, even when you're looking for it. Find the small black iron door set into the right-hand wall. No handle, no keyhole, but at your touch it swings open. Enter the sunlit garden of an old house that doesn't quite make sense; too grand for the shabby neighbourhood, too large for the space it occupies. A stranger greets you and invites you inside. At first, you won't want to leave. Later, you'll find that you can't.

Thomas MOGFORD – The Plant Hunter (2022, 432 pages)



1867. King's Road, Chelsea, is a sea of plant nurseries, catering to the Victorian obsession with rare and exotic flora, each fuelled by the dangerous world of the plant hunters. Harry Compton is as far from a plant hunter as one could imagine, but one small act of kindness sees him inherit a precious gift - a specimen of a fabled tree last heard of in 'The Travels of Marco Polo,' and a map. Seizing his chance for fame and fortune, Harry sets out to make his mark.

Deborah MOGGACH The Carer (2019, 274 pages)



James is getting on a bit and needs full-time help. So Phoebe and Robert, his middle-aged offspring, employ Mandy, who seems willing to take him off their hands. But as James regales his family with tales of Mandy's virtues, their shopping trips, and the shared pleasure of their journeys to garden centres, Phoebe and Robert sense something is amiss. Is this really their father, the distant figure who never once turned up for a sports day, now happily chortling over cuckoo clocks and television soaps? Then something happens that throws everything into new relief, and Phoebe and Robert discover that life most definitely does not stop for the elderly. It just moves onto a very different plane - changing all the stories they thought they knew so well.

Thomas MONTASSER – Very special year (2016, 198 pages)

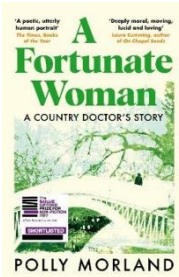


When businesswoman Valerie takes over the bookshop owned by her aunt – who has vanished without trace – her intention is to bring some order to the chaos, and then sell the business. But she has underestimated the power of the little shop. One day she stumbles upon a mysterious book with an unfinished ending. Valerie thinks it must be a defective copy, but when a customer turns up searching for that very book, her view of the shop – and world – shifts, as she is forced to question what is and isn't possible. (*translated from German*)

Erin MORGENSTERN The Night Circus (2011, 400 pages)

In 1886, a mysterious travelling circus becomes an international sensation. Open only at night, constructed entirely in black and white, Le Cirque des Reves delights all who wander its circular paths and warm themselves at its bonfire. Although there are acrobats, fortune-tellers and contortionists, the Circus of Dreams is no conventional spectacle. Some tents contain clouds, some ice. The circus seems almost to cast a spell over its aficionados, who call themselves the reveurs - the dreamers. At the heart of the story are two young magicians, Celia, the enchanter's daughter, and Marco, the sorcerer's apprentice. At the behest of their shadowy masters, they find themselves locked in a deadly contest, forced to test the very limits of the imagination.

Polly MORLAND A Fortunate Woman – A Country Doctor’s Story (2022, 235 pages NF)

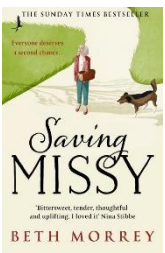


Polly Morland was clearing her late mother's house when she found a battered paperback fallen behind the family bookshelf. Opening it, she was astonished to see an old photograph of the remote, wooded valley in which she lives. The book was 'A Fortunate Man', John Berger's classic account of a country doctor working in the same valley more than half a century earlier. This chance discovery led Morland to the remarkable doctor who serves that valley community today, a woman whose own medical vocation was inspired by reading the very same book as a teenager. 'A Fortunate Woman' tells her compelling, true story, and how the tale of the old doctor has threaded through her own life in magical ways. **Shortlisted for The Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction.**

Michael MORPURGO Private Peaceful (2003, 192 pages)

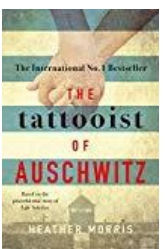
Heroism or cowardice; a stunning story of the First World War from a master storyteller. Told in the voice of a young soldier, the story follows 24 hours in his life at the front during WW1, and captures his memories as he looks back over his life. Full of stunningly researched detail and engrossing atmosphere, the book leads to a dramatic and moving conclusion. Both a love story and a deeply moving account of the horrors of the First World War, this book will reach everyone from 9 to 90.

Beth MORREY Saving Missy (2020, 375 pages)



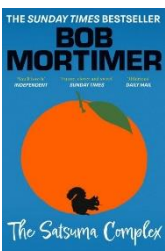
Missy Carmichael's life has become small. Grieving for a family she has lost or lost touch with, she's haunted by the echoes of her footsteps in her empty home. Missy knows that her loneliness is all her own fault. She deserves no more than this; not after what she's done. But a chance encounter in the park with two very different women opens the door to something different. A new life beckons for Missy, if only she can be brave enough to grasp the opportunity. But 79 is too late for a second chance. Isn't it?

Heather MORRIS The Tattooist of Auschwitz (2018, 270 pages)



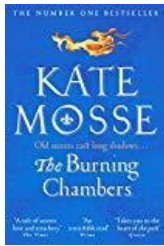
In 1942, Lale Sokolov arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau. He was given the job of tattooing the prisoners marked for survival - scratching numbers into his fellow victims' arms in indelible ink to create what would become one of the most potent symbols of the Holocaust. Waiting in line to be tattooed, terrified and shaking, was a young girl. For Lale - a dandy, a jack-the-lad, a bit of a chancer - it was love at first sight. And he was determined not only to survive himself, but to ensure this woman, Gita, did, too. So begins one of the most life-affirming, courageous, unforgettable and human stories of the Holocaust. *A Richard and Judy Autumn 2018 book club choice*

Bob MORTIMER – The Satsuma Complex (2022, 298 pages)



Gary Thorn goes for a pint with a work acquaintance called Brendan. When Brendan leaves early, Gary meets a girl in the pub. He doesn't catch her name, but falls for her anyway. When she suddenly disappears without saying goodbye, all Gary has to remember her by is the book she was reading: 'The Satsuma Complex'. But when Brendan goes missing, Gary needs to track down the girl he now calls Satsuma to get some answers. And so begins Gary's quest, through the estates and pie shops of South London, to finally bring some love and excitement into his unremarkable life.

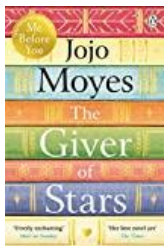
Kate MOSSE The Burning chambers (2018, 585 pages)



Carcassonne 1562: Nineteen-year-old Minou Joubert receives an anonymous letter at her father's bookshop. Sealed with a distinctive family crest, it contains just five words: *SHE KNOWS THAT YOU LIVE*. But before Minou can decipher the mysterious message, a chance encounter with Piet Reydon, changes her destiny forever. For Piet has a dangerous mission of his own, and he will need Minou's help if he is to get out of La Cité alive.

Toulouse: As the religious divide deepens in the Midi, Minou and Piet both find themselves trapped in Toulouse, facing new dangers as sectarian tensions ignite across the city. Meanwhile, as a long-hidden document threatens to resurface. **A Richard and Judy Spring 2019 book club choice**

Jojo MOYES The Giver of Stars (2019, 437 pages)



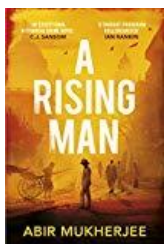
Alice Wright doesn't love her new American husband. Nor her domineering father-in-law or the judgmental townsfolk of Baileyville, Kentucky. Stifled and misunderstood, she yearns for escape and finds it in defiant Margery O'Hare and the sisterhood bringing books to the isolated and vulnerable. But when her father-in-law and the town turn against them, Alice fears the freedom, friendship and the new love she's found will be lost . . .

Nadifa MUHAMED The Fortune Men (2021, 373 pages)



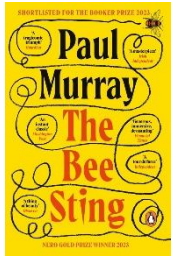
Mahmood Mattan is a fixture in Cardiff's Tiger Bay, 1952. He is a father, chancer, petty criminal. He is a smooth-talker with rakish charm and an eye for a good game. He is many things, but he is not a murderer. So when a shopkeeper is killed and all eyes fall on him, Mahmood isn't too worried. Since his Welsh wife Laura kicked him out for racking up debts he has wandered the streets and there are witnesses who allegedly saw him enter the shop that night. But Mahmood has escaped worse scrapes, and he is innocent in this country where justice is served.

Abir MUKHERJEE A rising man (2016, 386 pages)



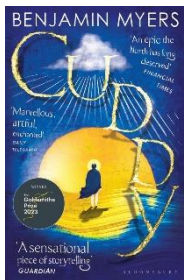
India, 1919. Desperate for a fresh start, Captain Sam Wyndham arrives to take up an important post in Calcutta's police force. He is soon called to the scene of a horrifying murder. The victim was a senior official, and a note in his mouth warns the British to leave India – or else. With the stability of the Empire under threat, Wyndham and Sergeant 'Surrender-not' Banerjee must solve the case quickly. But there are some who will do anything to stop them...

Paul MURRAY The Bee Sting (2023, 645 pages)



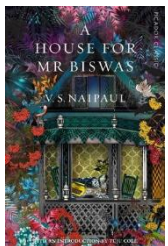
The Barnes family is in trouble. Dickie's once-lucrative car business is going under - but rather than face the music, he's spending his days in the woods, building an apocalypse-proof bunker with a renegade handyman. His wife Imelda is selling off her jewellery on eBay while their teenage daughter Cass seems determined to binge-drink her way to her final exams. And 12-year-old PJ is putting the final touches to his grand plan to run away from home. Where did it all go wrong? A patch of ice on the tarmac, a casual favour to a charming stranger, a bee caught beneath a bridal veil - can a single moment of bad luck change the direction of a life? And if the story has already been written - is there still time to find a happy ending? **Shortlisted for the Booker Prize, Writers Prize and Nero Award.**

Benjamin MYERS Cuddy (2023, 443 pages)



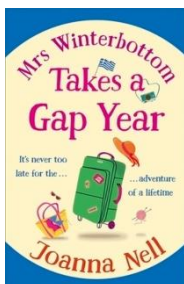
Travelling through the wilderness, a young woman has visions of a cathedral on a hill. The downtrodden wife of an archer seeks the truth in stone walls, in meadows full of garlic flowers. A group of soldiers sit out their last hours before their death under a vaulted ceiling. The professor receives unwelcome night-time visitors. A young man bids his dying mother goodbye, and sets off on his first day of work as a labourer. From these seeds of historical truth and strange mythology, Benjamin Myers spins an unforgettable story of love and loss. Unfolding over centuries, deploying a panoply of voices.

V.S. NAIPAUL A House for Mr Biswas ([1961] 2016, 640 pages)



Mr. Biswas has been told since the day of his birth that misfortune will follow him – and so it has. Meaning only to avoid punishment, he causes the death of his father and the dissolution of his family. Wanting simply to flirt with a beautiful woman, he ends up marrying her, and reluctantly relying on her domineering family for support. But in spite of endless setbacks, Mr. Biswas is determined to achieve independence, and so he begins his gruelling struggle to buy a home of his own. *Naipaul was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001*

Joanna NELL Mrs Winterbottom takes a gap year (2023, 323 pages)

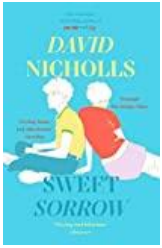


Heather Winterbottom has worked side by side with her husband as GPs in their idyllic rural practice for over forty years. But as the time comes to hang up their stethoscopes, the Winterbottoms discover that they have rather different visions of retirement. Heather dreams of exploring the Greek Islands whilst Alan dreams of growing his own vegetables. When things come to a head at a family lunch, Heather announces that she has decided to take a year off. From her old life, from her marriage - from Alan. Alone in Greece, Heather embarks on her very own odyssey - complete with peak experiences, pitfalls, and temptations.

Celeste NG Everything I Never Told You (2014, 304 pages)

Lydia is the favourite child of Marilyn and James Lee; their middle daughter, a girl who inherited her mother's bright blue eyes and her father's jet-black hair. Her parents are determined that Lydia will fulfill the dreams they were unable to pursue. When Lydia's body is found in the local lake, the delicate balancing act that has been keeping the Lee family together tumbles into chaos, forcing them to confront the long-kept secrets that have been slowly pulling them apart.

David NICHOLLS **Sweet sorrow** (2019, 395 pages)



In 1997, Charlie Lewis is the kind of boy you don't remember in the school photograph. His exams have not gone well. At home he is looking after his father, when surely it should be the other way round, and if he thinks about the future at all, it is with a kind of dread. Then Fran Fisher bursts into his life and despite himself, Charlie begins to hope. But if Charlie wants to be with Fran, he must take on a challenge that could lose him the respect of his friends and require him to become a different person. He must join the Company.

David NICHOLLS **Us** (2014, 399 pages)

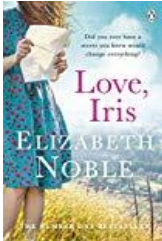


Douglas Petersen understands his wife's need to 'rediscover herself' now that their son is leaving home. So when Connie announces that she will be leaving, too, he resolves to make their last family holiday into the trip of a lifetime: one that will draw the three of them closer, and win the respect of his son. One that will make Connie fall in love with him all over again. The hotels are booked, the tickets bought, the itinerary planned and printed. What could possibly go wrong?

Audrey NIFFENEGGER **The Night Bookmobile (Graphic Novel)** (2010, 40 pages)

The Night Bookmobile tells the story of a young woman who encounters a mysterious disappearing mobile library one night, which happens to stock every book she has ever read. Seeing both her own history and her most intimate self in this library, she embarks on a search for the elusive bookmobile. Over time, her search turns into an obsession as she longs to be reunited with her own collection and her memories.

Elizabeth NOBLE **Love, Iris** (2018, 480 pages)



Gigi is a grandmother, Tess is pregnant for the first time. But when they meet, each one is coping with their own secret sadness. Tess is writing letters to her unborn baby with no one else to turn to, and Gigi has reached breaking point in her marriage. Little do they know how much they will come to mean to one another as both of their lives are turned upside-down. Their story is about love in all its forms: the love between a mother and her unborn child, between a grandmother and her granddaughter, between spouses and between friends.

Tess and Gigi will find what they need most in the place they least expect, and learn to understand the future by unlocking the past.

Liz NUGENT **Skin deep** (2018, 384 pages)

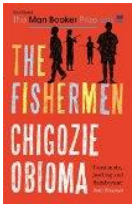


She's not who you think she is ...Delia O'Flaherty is as wild, remote and dangerous as her island home off the west coast of Ireland. Her adoring father tells her that one day she will be the Queen of Inishcrann. However, tragedy leaves Delia alone in the world, to make her way relying on her wits and her rare beauty. But Delia's beauty is deceptive - as anyone who cares about her eventually finds out. What is the truth behind Delia's tragic past? And what happens when a face from that past turns up on her doorstep?

Barack OBAMA Dreams from my Father (Biography) (2004, 464 pages)

The son of a black African father and a white American mother, Obama was only two years old when his father walked out on the family. Many years later, Obama receives a phone call from Nairobi: his father is dead. This sudden news inspires an emotional odyssey for Obama, determined to learn the truth of his father's life and reconcile his divided inheritance. Written at the age of thirty-three, "Dreams from my Father" is an unforgettable read. It illuminates not only Obama's journey, but also our universal desire to understand our history, and what makes us the people we are.

Chigozie OBIOMA The Fishermen (2015, 414 pages)



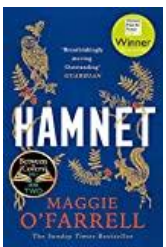
In a small town in western Nigeria, four young brothers - the youngest is nine, the oldest fifteen - use their strict father's absence from home to go fishing at a forbidden local river. They encounter a dangerous local madman who predicts that the oldest brother will be killed by another. This prophecy breaks their strong bond and unleashes a tragic chain of events of almost mythic proportions. *Shortlisted for The 2015 Man Booker Prize, and for the Guardian First Book Award.*

Edna O'BRIEN The Little red chairs (2015, 299 pages)



One night, in the dead of winter, a mysterious stranger arrives in the small Irish town of Cloonoila. Broodingly handsome, worldly, and charismatic, Dr. Vladimir Dragan is a poet, a self-proclaimed holistic healer, and a welcome disruption to the monotony of village life. Before long, the beautiful black-haired Fidelma McBride falls under his spell and, defying the shackles of wedlock and convention, turns to him to cure her of her deepest pains. Then, one morning, the illusion is abruptly shattered. While en route to pay tribute at Yeats's grave, Dr. Vlad is arrested and revealed to be a notorious war criminal and mass murderer. The Cloonoila community is devastated by this revelation, and no one more than Fidelma, who is made to pay for her deviance and desire. In disgrace and utterly alone, she embarks on a journey that will bring both profound hardship and, ultimately, the prospect of redemption. *Shortlisted for the Irish Book Awards.*

Maggie O'FARRELL Hamnet (2020, 372 pages)

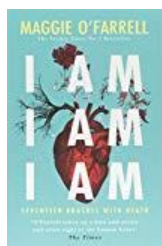


On a summer's day in 1596, a young girl in Stratford-upon-Avon takes to her bed with a fever. Her twin brother, Hamnet, searches everywhere for help. Why is nobody at home? Their mother, Agnes, is over a mile away, in the garden where she grows medicinal herbs. Their father is working in London. Neither parent knows that one of the children will not survive the week. *Winner of the Women's Prize for Fiction 2020*

Maggie O'FARRELL The Hand that First Held Mine (2010, 374 pages)

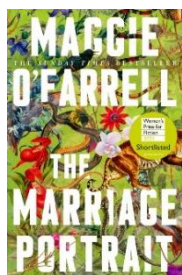
When the sophisticated Innes Kent turns up on her doorstep, Lexie Sinclair realises she cannot wait any longer for her life to begin, and leaves for London. There, at the heart of the 1950s Soho art scene, she carves out a new life. In the present day, Elina and Ted are reeling from the difficult birth of their first child. Elina struggles to reconcile the demands of motherhood with sense of herself as an artist, and Ted is disturbed by memories of his own childhood that don't tally with his parents' version of events. As Ted begins to search for answers, an extraordinary portrait of two women is revealed, separated by fifty years, but connected in ways that neither could ever have expected.

Maggie O'FARRELL I am, I am, I am: seventeen brushes with death (Non-Fiction)
(2017, 219 pages)



A childhood illness she was not expected to survive. A teenage yearning to escape that nearly ended in disaster. A terrifying encounter on a remote path. A mismanaged labour in an understaffed hospital. This is the extraordinary memoir from bestselling author Maggie O'Farrell. It is a book to make you question yourself. What would you do if your life was in danger, and what would you stand to lose?

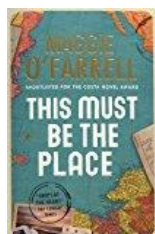
Maggie O'FARRELL – The Marriage Portrait (2022, 438 pages)



Winter, 1561. Lucrezia, Duchess of Ferrara, is taken on an unexpected visit to a country villa by her husband, Alfonso. As they sit down to dinner it occurs to Lucrezia that Alfonso has a sinister purpose in bringing her here. He intends to kill her. Lucrezia is sixteen years old, and has led a sheltered life locked away inside Florence's grandest palazzo. Here, in this remote villa, she is entirely at the mercy of her increasingly erratic husband. What is Lucrezia to do with this sudden knowledge? What chance does she have against Alfonso, ruler of a province, and a trained soldier? How can she ensure her survival. 'The

Marriage Portrait' is an unforgettable reimagining of the life of a young woman whose proximity to power places her in mortal danger. **Shortlisted for Womens Prize for Fiction 2023**

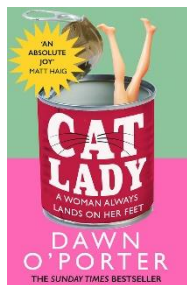
Maggie O'FARRELL This must be the place (2016, 496 pages)



Meet Daniel Sullivan, a man with a complicated life. A New Yorker living in the wilds of Ireland, he has children he never sees in California; a father he loathes in Brooklyn; and a wife, Claudette, who is a reclusive ex-film star given to shooting at anyone who ventures up their driveway. He is also about to find out something about a woman he lost touch with 20 years ago, and this discovery will send him off course, far away from wife and home. Will his love for Claudette be enough to bring him back? At its heart it is an extraordinary portrait of a

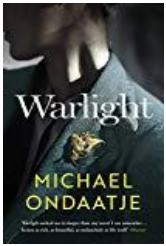
marriage, the forces that hold it together, and the pressures that drive it apart. *A Richard and Judy Summer 2017 choice*

Dawn O'PORTER – Cat Lady (2022, 342p)



It's safer for Mia to play the part that people expect. She's a good wife to her husband Tristan, a doting stepmother, she slips on her suit for work each morning like a new skin. But beneath the surface, there's another woman just clawing to get out. When a shocking event shatters the conventional life she's been so careful to build, Mia is faced with a choice. Does she live for a society that's all too quick to judge, or does she live for herself? And if that's as an independent woman with a cat, then the world better get ready.

Michael ONDAATJE **Warlight** (2018, 289 pages)



It is 1945, and London is still reeling from the Blitz and years of war. 14-year-old Nathaniel and his sister, Rachel, are apparently abandoned by their parents, left in the care of an enigmatic figure named The Moth. They suspect he might be a criminal, and grow both more convinced and less concerned as they get to know his eccentric crew of friends: men and women with a shared history, all of whom seem determined now to protect, and educate Rachel and Nathaniel. But are they really what and who they claim to be? A dozen years later, Nathaniel begins to uncover all he didn't know or understand in that time, and it is this journey that is told in this magnificent novel.

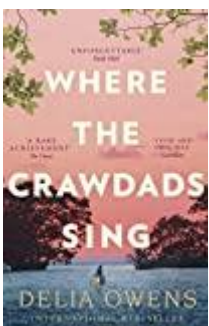
George ORWELL **Down and out in Paris and London** (2011 [1933], 256 pages)

Written when Orwell was a struggling writer in his twenties, this book documents his 'first contact with poverty'. Here, he painstakingly documents a world of unrelenting drudgery and squalor - sleeping in bug-infested hostels and doss houses of last resort, working as a dishwasher in Paris's vile 'Hôtel X', surviving on scraps and cigarette butts, living alongside tramps, a star-gazing pavement artist and a starving Russian ex-army captain. Exposing a shocking, previously-hidden world to his readers, Orwell gave a human face to the statistics of poverty for the first time. Despite its age, down and out still strikes a chord in the modern world and while much has changed in the intervening years, there are still telling parallels with today's society.

George ORWELL **Nineteen Eighty-Four** (1948, 336 pages)

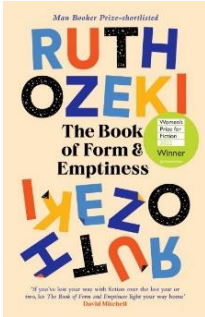
Winston Smith works for the Ministry of Truth in London, chief city of Airstrip One. Big Brother stares out from every poster, the Thought Police uncover every act of betrayal. When Winston finds love with Julia, he discovers that life does not have to be dull and deadening, and awakens to new possibilities. Winston and Julia begin to question the Party; they are drawn towards conspiracy. Yet Big Brother will not tolerate dissent - even in the mind. For those with original thoughts they invented Room 101. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is George Orwell's terrifying vision of a totalitarian future in which everything and everyone is slave to a tyrannical regime.

Delia OWENS **Where the crawdads sing** (2019, 370 pages)



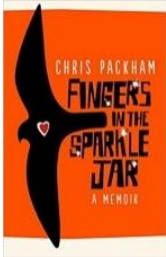
For years, rumours of the 'Marsh Girl' have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. So in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. But Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home, finding friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand. Then the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. When two young men from town become intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new life - until the unthinkable happens. *A Richard and Judy Book Club choice for Winter 2020*

Ruth OZEKI – The Book of Form and Emptiness (2021, 550p)



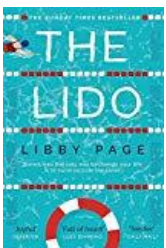
After the tragic death of his father, thirteen-year-old Benny Oh begins to hear voices. The voices belong to the things in his house and sound variously pleasant, angry or sad. Then his mother develops a hoarding problem, and the voices grow more clamorous. Benny seeks refuge in the silence of a large public library. There he meets a mesmerising street artist with a smug pet ferret; a homeless philosopher-poet, and his very own Book, who narrates Benny's life and teaches him to listen to the things that truly matter. **Winner of the 2022 Women's Prize for Fiction**

Chris PACKHAM Fingers in the sparkle jar (Non-Fiction) (2016, 384 pages)



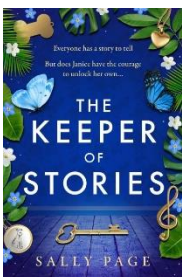
An introverted, unusual young boy, isolated by his obsessions and a loner at school, Chris Packham was only at home in the fields and woods around his suburban home. But when he stole a young kestrel from its nest, he was about to embark on a friendship that would teach him what it meant to love, and that would change him forever. In his rich, lyrical and emotionally exposing memoir, Chris brings to life his childhood in the 70s, from his bedroom bursting with fox skulls, birds' eggs and sweaty jam jars, to his feral adventures. But pervading his story is the search for freedom, meaning and acceptance in a world that didn't understand him. *Longlisted for the 2017 Wainwright Prize for Nature and Travel writing.*

Libby PAGE The Lido (2018, 394 pages)



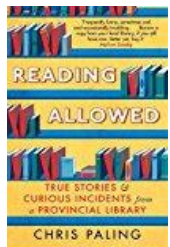
Rosemary has lived in Brixton all her life. But now everything she knows is changing - the library where she used to work has closed, the family fruit and veg shop has become a trendy bar, and her beloved husband George is gone. Kate has just moved and feels alone in a city that is too big for her. She's at the bottom rung of her career as a journalist on a local paper, and is determined to make something of it. So when the local lido is threatened with closure, Kate knows this story could be her chance to shine. And Rosemary knows it is the end of everything for her. Together they are determined to make a stand, to show that the pool is more than just a place to swim - it is the heart of the community. Together they will show the importance of friendship, the value of community, and how ordinary people can protect the things they love.

Sally PAGE The Keeper of Stories (2022, 400 pages)



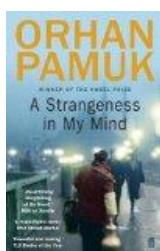
Cleaner Janice knows that it is in people's stories that you really get to know them. From recently-widowed Fiona and her son Adam; to opera-singing Geordie; and the awful Mrs 'YeahYeahYeah' Janice has a unique insight into the community around her. When Janice starts cleaning for Mrs B she finally meets someone who wants to hear her story. But Janice is the keeper of stories, she doesn't have a story to tell. At least, not one she can share. What is she hiding? After all, doesn't everyone have a story to tell?

Chris PALING **Reading allowed (Non-Fiction)** (2017, 256 pages)



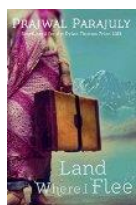
Chris works as a librarian in a small-town library in the south of England. This is the story of the library, its staff, and the fascinating group of people who use the library on a regular basis. We'll meet lots of characters here – some stories are tragic, some are amusing, some are genuinely surreal, but together they will paint a bigger picture of the world we live in today, and of a library's hugely important place within it. Yes, of course, people come in to borrow books, but the library is also the equivalent of the village pump. It's one of the few places left where anyone, regardless of age or income or background, can wander in and find somebody to listen to their concerns, to share the time of day. *Reading Allowed* will provide us with a fascinating portrait of a place that we all value and cherish, but which few of us truly know very much about. **Librarian recommended**

Orhan PAMUK **A Strangeness in my mind** (2015, 784 pages)



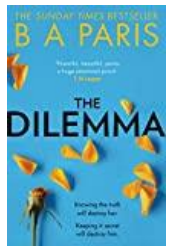
In the four decades between 1969 and 2012, Mevlut works a number of different jobs on the streets of Istanbul, from selling yoghurt and cooked rice, to guarding a car park. He observes many different kinds of people thronging the streets, he watches most of the city get demolished and re-built, and he sees migrants from Anatolia making a fortune; at the same time, he witnesses all of the transformative moments, political clashes, and military coups that shape the country. He always wonders what it is that separates him from everyone else - the source of that strangeness in his mind. But he never stops selling boza during winter evenings and trying to understand who his beloved really is. What matters more in love: what we wish for, or what our fate has in store? Do our choices dictate whether we will be happy or not, or are these things determined by forces beyond our control? *Shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize 2016. (translated from Turkish)*

Prajwal PARAJULY **Land where I flee** (2014, 265 pages)



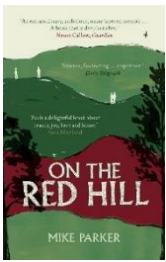
To commemorate Chitrlekha Nepauney's Chaurasi 84th birthday three of her grandchildren are travelling to Gangtok, Sikkim, to pay their respects. Agastaya is flying in from New York, he is dreading his family's inquisition into why he is not married, and is terrified that the reason for his bachelordom will be discovered. Joining him are Manasa and Bhagwati, travelling from London and Colorado respectively. One the Oxford-educated achiever; the other the disgraced eloper - one moneyed but miserable; the other ostracized but optimistic. All three harbour the same dual objective: to emerge from the celebrations with their formidable grandmother's blessing and their nerves intact - a goal that will become increasingly impossible thanks to a mischievous maid and a fourth, uninvited guest.

B.A. PARIS **The Dilemma** (2020, 336 pages)



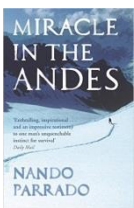
It's Livia's 40th birthday and she's having the party of a lifetime to make up for the wedding she never had. Everyone she loves will be there except her daughter Marnie, who's studying abroad. But although Livia loves Marnie, she's secretly glad she won't be at the party. She needs to tell Adam something about their daughter but she's waiting until the party is over so they can have this last happy time together. Adam wants everything to be perfect for Livia so he's secretly arranged for Marnie to come home and surprise her on her birthday. During the day, he hears some terrible news. He needs to tell Livia, because how can the party go on? But she's so happy, so excited - and the guests are about to arrive.

Mike PARKER On the Red Hill; Where four lives fell into place (Non-Fiction) (2019, 400 pages)



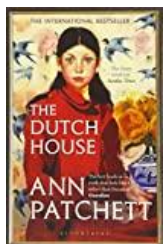
In the early 2000s Mike Parker and his partner Peredur (Preds) moved into a small village in remote West Wales. A few weeks after arriving, they met Reg and George, a couple for over 60 years, who had arrived in the village at a time when their relationship could have landed them in prison. The four men became acquaintances, and over the years, firm friends. When Reg and George died, within a few weeks of each other, Mike and Preds discovered that they had been left their home. 'On the Red Hill' tells the story of Rhiw Goch, the Red Hill, but also the community, and of a remarkable relationship. *RG Team: A fascinating (and surprising!) look at a relationship lasting sixty years.*

Nando PARRADO Miracle in the Andes (Non-Fiction) (2006, 274 pages)



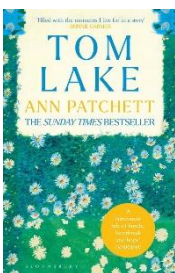
When Nando Parrado took off on a flight from Uruguay to Chile with his rugby team-mates, he was looking forward to an enjoyable weekend break and had invited his mother and sister along for the trip. Then disaster struck, as their plane crashed into a mountain. Miraculously, many of the passengers survived but Nando's family died and he was unconscious for three days. Stranded 11 000 feet up on an inhospitable glacier, Nando and one of his friends set off on an impossible journey, climbing 17 000 feet-high mountains, facing death at every step.

Ann PATCHETT The Dutch House (2019, 337 pages)



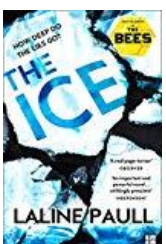
Danny Conroy grows up in the Dutch House, a lavish folly in small-town Pennsylvania taken on by his property developer father. Though his father is distant and his mother is absent, Danny has his beloved sister Maeve: Maeve, with her wall of black hair, her delicacy, her brilliance. Life is comfortable and coherent. One day their father brings Andrea home: Andrea, small and neat, a dark hat no bigger than a saucer pinned over a twist of her fair hair. Though they cannot know it, Andrea's advent to the Dutch House sows the seed of the defining loss of Danny and Maeve's lives.

Ann PATCHETT Tom Lake (2023, 309 pages)



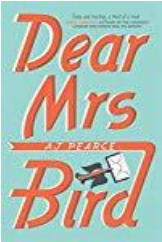
In the spring of 2020, Lara's three daughters return to the family's orchard in Northern Michigan. While picking cherries, they beg their mother to tell them the story of Peter Duke, a famous actor with whom she shared both a stage and a romance years before at a theatre company called Tom Lake. This novel is a meditation on youthful love, married love, and the lives parents have led before their children were born. Both hopeful and elegiac, it explores what it means to be happy even when the world is falling apart.

Laline PAULL The Ice (2017, 356 pages)



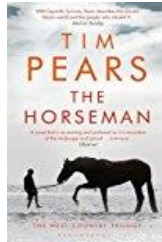
A frozen corpse emerges from a melting glacier and after three years of uncertainty, Sean Cawson can finally put the past behind him. Tom Harding, Sean's friend of thirty years was lost in an accident and Sean was the last person to see him alive. Tom's body is not the only secret hidden in the ice. As global businesses and global powers jostle for territory in this new, lawless frontier there are big opportunities for those with the courage – or mendacity – to seize them.

A.J. PEARCE **Dear Mrs Bird** (2018, 308 pages)



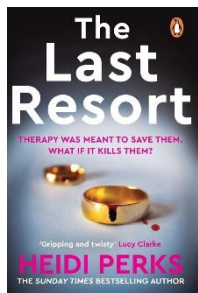
London, 1941. Amid the falling bombs Emmeline Lake dreams of becoming a fearless Lady War Correspondent. Unfortunately, Emmy instead finds herself employed as a typist for the formidable Henrietta Bird, the renowned agony aunt at Woman's Friend magazine. Mrs Bird refuses to read, let alone answer, letters containing any form of Unpleasantness, and definitely not those from the lovelorn, grief-stricken or morally conflicted. But the thought of these desperate women waiting for an answer at this most desperate of times becomes impossible for Emmy to ignore. She decides she simply must help and secretly starts to write back - after all, what harm could that possibly do?

Tim PEARS **The Horseman** (2017, 302 pages)



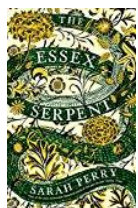
Somerset, 1911. The forces of war are building across Europe. Sid, is underkeeper to the head gamekeeper. His son, Leo, a talented rider, grows up alongside the master's spirited daughter, Charlotte--a girl who shoots and rides, much to the surprise of the locals. In beautiful, pastoral writing, *The Horseman* tells the story of a family, a community, and the landscape they come from. *The Horseman* is the first book of a trilogy that will follow Leo away from the estate and into the First World War and beyond.

Heidi PERKS **The Last Resort** (2023, 361 pages)



Two people. Two sides of the story. Whose do you trust? When Erin and Will start having couples therapy, they hope it will fix the rift that has appeared out of nowhere in their marriage. But their therapist Maggie can't work out whose version of the truth she can trust. Then Erin is brought into hospital in a critical condition following a hit-and-run accident. Now everyone is desperate to unravel the truth. Because if this isn't an accident, then someone close to Erin must be responsible. **Richard and Judy Winter list 2023**

Sarah PERRY **The Essex serpent** (2016, 448 pages)



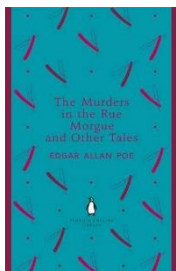
Cora is a well-to-do London widow who moves to the Essex parish of Aldwinter, and Will is the local vicar. They meet as their village is engulfed by rumours that the mythical Essex Serpent, once said to roam the marshes claiming human lives, has returned. Cora, a keen amateur naturalist is enthralled, convinced the beast may be a real undiscovered species. But Will sees his parishioners' agitation as a moral panic, a deviation from true faith. Although they can agree on absolutely nothing, as the seasons turn around them in this quiet corner of England, they find themselves inexorably drawn together and torn apart. *Listed for prizes including Bailey's Prize and Costa Novel Prize, winner of the British Book Awards and a Summer 2017 Richard and Judy choice.*

Ingrid PERSAUD **Love after love** (2020, 410 pages)



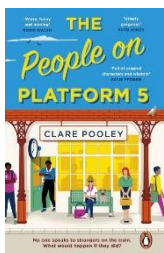
After Betty Ramdin's husband dies, she invites a colleague, Mr. Chetan, to move in with her and her son, Solo. Over time, the three become a family, loving each other deeply and depending upon one another. Then, one fateful night, Solo overhears Betty confiding in Mr. Chetan and learns a secret that plunges him into torment. Solo flees Trinidad for New York to carve out a lonely existence as an undocumented immigrant, and Mr. Chetan remains the singular thread holding mother and son together. But soon, Mr. Chetan's own burdensome secret is revealed, with heartbreaking consequences. *Winner of the Costa First Novel Prize 2020*

Edgar Allan POE **Murder in the Rue Morgue & Other Tales (1841, 256 pages)**



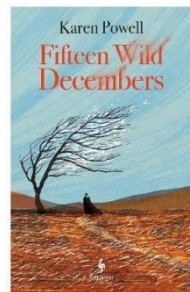
In just five stories, Edgar Allan Poe laid down the ground rules of detective fiction. This is a compendium of Poe's tales of mystery and intrigue featuring his ground-breaking detective Auguste Dupin.

Clare POOLEY – **The People on Platform 5 (2022, 378 pages)**



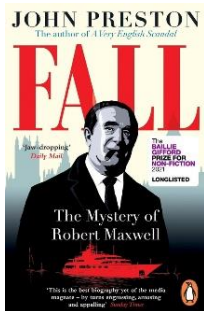
Nobody ever talks to strangers on the train. It's a rule. But what would happen if they did? Every day at 8:05, Iona Iverson boards the train to go to work. Every day, she sees the same people and makes assumptions about them, even giving them nicknames. But they never speak. Obviously. Then, one morning, Smart-but-Sexist Surbiton chokes on a grape right in front of Iona. Probably-a-Psychopath-New-Malden steps up to help and saves his life, and this one event sparks a chain reaction. With nothing in common but their commute, an eclectic group of people learn that their assumptions about each other don't match reality. But when Iona's life begins to fall apart, will her new friends be there when she needs them most?

Karen POWELL **Fifteen Wild Decembers (2023, 288 pages)**



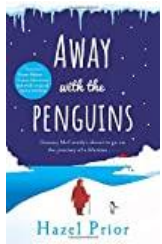
Isolated from society, Emily Bronte and her siblings spend their days inventing elaborate fictional realms or roaming the wild moors above their family home in Yorkshire. When the time comes for them to venture out into the world to earn a living, each of them struggles to adapt, but for Emily the change is catastrophic. To the outside world, Emily Bronte appears taciturn and unexceptional, but beneath the surface her mind is in a creative ferment. A violent phenomenon is about to burst forth that will fuse her imaginary world with the landscape of her beloved Yorkshire and change the literary world forever. **Shortlisted for the Nero Book Award for Fiction.**

John PRESTON **Fall – The Mystery of Robert Maxwell (2021, 322 pages. NF)**



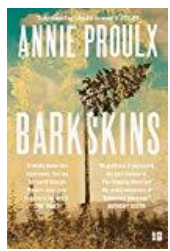
February 1991, Robert Maxwell made a triumphant entrance into Manhattan harbour on board his yacht, the Lady Ghislaine. Crowds lined the quayside to watch his arrival. Taxi drivers stopped to shake his hand, children asked for his autograph and when Maxwell went to dine in the most fashionable Chinese restaurant in Manhattan, all the diners gave him a standing ovation. 10 months later, he disappeared off the same yacht and was found dead in the water. Within a few days, Maxwell was being reviled as the embodiment of greed and unscrupulousness. No one had ever fallen so far and so quickly. What went so wrong? Winner of the Costa Biography Prize.

Hazel PRIOR **Away with the penguins** (2020, 320 pages)



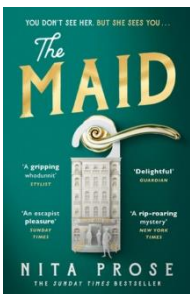
Veronica McCreedy lives in a mansion by the sea. She is rarely seen by anyone because, at 85, her days are spent mostly at home, alone. She can be found either collecting litter from the beach ('people who litter the countryside should be shot'), trying to locate her glasses ('someone must have moved them') or shouting instructions to her assistant, Eileen ('Eileen, door!'). Veronica doesn't have family or friends nearby. Not that she knows about, anyway. And she has no idea where she's going to leave her considerable wealth when she dies. But today Veronica is going to make a decision that will change all of this. *A Richard and Judy Christmas 2020 choice*

Annie PROULX **Barkskins** (2017, 700 pages)



In the late 17th century two illiterate woodsmen, Rene Sel and Charles Duquet, make their way from Northern France to New France to seek a living. Bound to a feudal lord, a 'seigneur', for three years in exchange for land, they suffer extraordinary hardship, always in awe of the forest they are charged with clearing, sometimes brimming with dreams of its commercial potential. Rene marries an Indian healer, and they have children, mixing the blood of two cultures. Duquet travels the globe and back, starting a logging company that will prosper for generations. Proulx tells the stories of the children, grandchildren, and descendants of these two lineages, the Sels and the Duquets, as well as the descendants of their allies and foes, as they travel back to Europe, to China, to New England, always in quest of a livelihood or a fortune, or fleeing stunningly brutal conditions. *Longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction 2017*

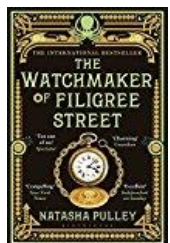
Nita PROSE **The Maid** (2022, 343 pages)



Molly the maid is all alone in the world. A nobody. She's used to being invisible in her job at the Regency Grand Hotel, plumping pillows and wiping away the grime, dust and secrets of the guests who pass through. But Molly is thrown into the spotlight when she discovers an infamous guest, Mr Black, very dead in his bed. Molly becomes embroiled in a hunt for the truth, learning who to trust as she navigates the secret underbelly of the Regency Grand Hotel. Librarian recommended

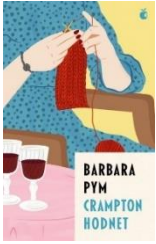
Winner of the Goodreads choice award for best mystery thriller

Natasha PULLEY **The Watchmaker of Filigree Street** (2015, 318 pages)



It's 1883. Thaniel Steepleton returns home to his tiny London apartment to find a gold pocket watch on his pillow. Six months later the mysterious timepiece saves his life, drawing him away from a blast that destroys Scotland Yard. At last he goes in search of its maker, Keita Mori, a kind, lonely immigrant from Japan. Although Mori seems harmless, a chain of unexplainable events soon suggests he must be hiding something. When Grace Carrow, an Oxford physicist, unwittingly interferes, Thaniel is torn between opposing loyalties.

Barbara PYM **Crampton Hodnet** (1985, 224 pages)

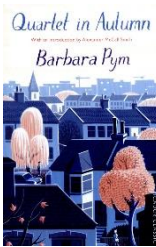


Miss Doggett fills her life by giving tea parties to academics and acting as watchdog of the morals of North Oxford. Anthea, her niece, is in love with a dashing upper-class undergraduate. Of this, Miss Doggett thoroughly approves. Anthea's father, however, is carrying on in the most unseemly fashion with his student!

Barbara PYM **Excellent Women** (1952, 304 pages)

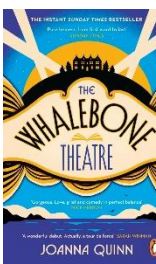
Mildred Lathbury is one of those 'excellent women' who is often taken for granted. She is a godsend, 'capable of dealing with most of the stock situations of life: birth, marriage, death, the successful jumble sales, the garden fete spoilt by bad weather'. As such, she often gets herself embroiled in other people's lives such as those of her glamorous new neighbours, the Napiers, whose marriage seems to be on the rocks. One cannot take sides in these matters, though it is tricky, especially when Mildred, teetering on the edge of spinsterhood, has a soft spot for dashing young Rockingham Napier.

Barbara PYM **Quartet in autumn** (1977, 186 pages)



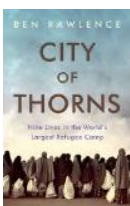
This is the story of four people in late middle-age - Edwin, Norman, Letty and Marcia - whose chief point of contact is that they work in the same office and they suffer the same problem - loneliness. Pym conducts us through their small lives and the facade they erect to defend themselves against the outside world. There is nevertheless an obstinate optimism in her characters, allowing them in their different ways to win through to a kind of hope.

Joanna QUINN – **The Whalebone Theatre** (2022, 547 pages)



Cristabel Seagrave has always wanted her life to be a story, but there are no girls in the books in her dusty family library. For an unwanted orphan who grows into an unmarriageable young woman, there is no place at all for her in a traditional English manor. But from the day that a whale washes up on the beach at the Chilcombe estate in Dorset, and twelve-year-old Cristabel plants her flag and claims it as her own, she is determined to do things differently.

Ben RAWLENCE **City of thorns: nine lives in the world's largest refugee camp (Non-Fiction)** (2016, 352 pages)



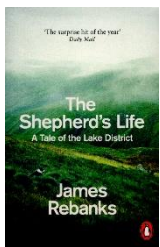
To the charity workers, Dadaab refugee camp is a humanitarian crisis; to the Kenyan government, it is a 'nursery for terrorists!'; to the western media, it is a dangerous no-go area; but to its half a million residents, it is their last resort. Situated hundreds of miles from any other settlement, in the midst of the inhospitable desert of northern Kenya, Dadaab is a city like no other. Ben Rawlence became a first-hand witness to a strange and desperate limbo-land, getting to know many of those who have come there seeking sanctuary.

Eleanor Ray **Everything is Beautiful** (2021, 317 pages)



When Amy Ashton's world came crashing down eleven years ago, she started a collection. Just a little collection, just a few keepsakes of happier times: some honeysuckle to remind herself of the boy she loved, a chipped China bird, an old terracotta pot. Things that others might throw away, but to Amy, represent a life that could have been. Now her house is overflowing with the objects she loves. When a family move in next door, a chance discovery unearths a mystery long buried, and Amy's carefully curated life begins to unravel. If she can find the courage to face her past, might the future she thought she'd lost still be hers for the taking?

James REBANKS **The Shepherd's life: a tale of the Lake District (Non-Fiction)** (2015, 292 pages)

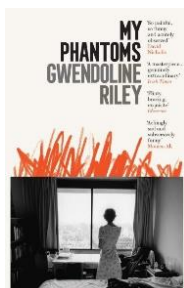


Some people's lives are entirely their own creations. James Rebanks' isn't. The first son of a shepherd, who was the first son of a shepherd himself, he and his family have lived and worked in and around the Lake District for generations. Their way of life is ordered by the seasons and the work they demand, and has been for hundreds of years.

Jean RHYS **The Wide Sargasso Sea** (1966 [2000], 192 pages)

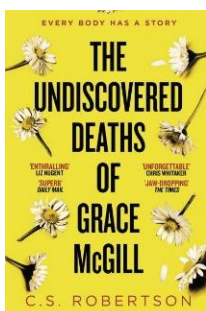
Jean Rhys's grand attempt to tell what she felt was the story of *Jane Eyre's* 'madwoman in the attic', Bertha Rochester. Born into the oppressive, colonialist society of 1930s Jamaica, white Creole heiress Antoinette Cosway meets a young Englishman who is drawn to her innocent beauty and sensuality. After their marriage, however, disturbing rumours begin to circulate which poison her husband against her. Caught between his demands and her own precarious sense of belonging, Antoinette is inexorably driven towards madness, and her husband into the arms of another novel's heroine.

Gwendoline RILEY **My Phantoms** (2021, 199 pages)



Helen Grant is a mystery to her daughter. An extrovert with few friends who has sought intimacy in the wrong places; a twice-divorced mother-of-two now living alone surrounded by her memories, Helen (known to her acquaintances as 'Hen') has always haunted Bridget. Now, Bridget is an academic in her forties. She sees Helen once a year, and considers the problem to be contained. But when Helen makes it clear that she wants more, it seems an old struggle will have to be replayed.

Craig ROBERTSON – **Undiscovered deaths of Grace McGill** (2021, 359 pages)

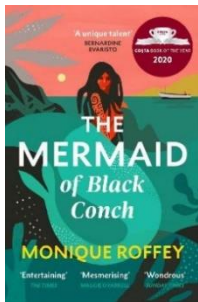


Grace McGill is an insular, friendless woman, living in Glasgow in her 30s. She has her beloved cat, and she has her own business - deep cleaning the houses of Undiscovereds. People who die alone and stay that way until they are found. While working in the home of a man named Tommy Agnew, her suspicions are aroused by a hidden photograph and a stack of newspapers, all from the same date over many years. Grace can't get the mysterious life of Tommy Agnew out of her head, and begins an investigation that could cost her life.

Deborah RODRIGUEZ The Little Coffee Shop of Kabul (2013, 416 pages)

The story of a remarkable coffee shop in the heart of Afghanistan, and the men and women who meet there — thrown together by circumstance, bonded by secrets, and united in an extraordinary friendship. Sunny, the proud proprietor, who needs an ingenious plan - and fast - to keep her café and customers safe. Yazmina, a young pregnant woman stolen from her remote village and now abandoned on Kabul's violent streets. Candace, a wealthy American who has finally left her husband for her Afghan lover, the enigmatic Wakil. Isabel, a determined journalist with a secret that might keep her from the biggest story of her life. And Halajan, the sixty-year-old den mother, whose long-hidden love affair breaks all the rules.

Monique ROFFEY The Mermaid of Black Conch (2020, 272 pages)



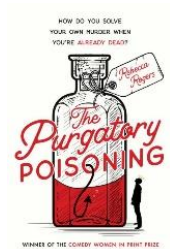
March 1976: St Constance, a tiny Caribbean village on the island of Black Conch. A fisherman attracts a beautiful young woman cursed by jealous wives to live as a mermaid. But her fascination is her undoing. She hears his boat's engine again, follows it, and finds herself at the mercy of American tourists. After a fearsome battle, she is pulled out of the sea and strung up on the dock as a trophy. The fisherman rescues her, and gently wins her trust - as she starts to transform into a woman. **Winner of the Costa Award 2020.**

Marie-Sabine ROGER Get well soon (2017, 250 pages)



Saved from drowning in Paris's River Seine, a sixty-something misanthrope finds himself stuck in a hospital bed for six weeks while he recovers. As he looks back on his life, the good and the bad, he makes some unexpected new acquaintances, and just when he thought life had no more surprises in store for him, he finds out he was wrong.... *(translated from French)*

Rebecca ROGERS – The Purgatory Poisoning (2023, 400 pages)

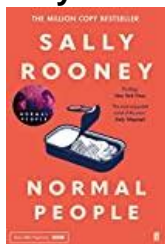


How do you solve your own murder when you're already dead? Purgatory (noun): 1. Where the dead are sent to atone. 2. A place of suffering or torment. 3. A youth hostel where the occupants play Scrabble and the mattresses are paper thin. When Dave wakes up in his own personal purgatory (St Ives Youth Hostel circa 1992), he's shocked to discover he's dead. And worse - he was murdered. Heaven doesn't know who did it so, with the help of two rogue angels, Dave must uncover the truth. **Winner of the Comedy Women in Print Prize 2023. Librarian recommended.**

Jennie ROONEY Red Joan (2014, 400 pages)

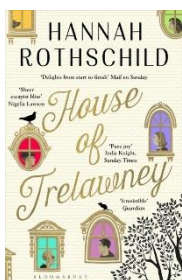
Jenny Rooney's third novel is loosely inspired by the story of Melita Norwood, unmasked in her eighties as a spy for the Russians. Rooney's heroine Joan Stanley is a respectable widow in her 80s, returned to the UK after decades in Australia. One morning her tranquil existence, painting watercolours, gardening and going to ballroom dancing classes, is interrupted by the arrival of intelligence officers, who have found out that in the 1940s Joan provided Russian intelligence officers with highly confidential information? Why? The story flits between Joan's present-day interrogation attended by her adopted son, a QC who had no idea about his mother's past, and Joan's own youth.

Sally ROONEY **Normal people** (2018, 266 pages)



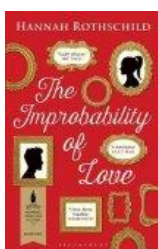
Connell and Marianne grow up in the same small town in the west of Ireland, but the similarities end there. In school, Connell is popular and well-liked, while Marianne is a loner. But when the two strike up a conversation - awkward but electrifying - something life-changing begins. *Normal People* is a story of mutual fascination, friendship and love. It takes us from that first conversation to the years beyond, in the company of two people who try to stay apart but find they can't. *Longlisted for the Man Booker and Women's Prizes, Winner of the Costa Novel Award 2018*

Hannah ROTHSCHILD **House of Trelawney** (2020, 358 pages)



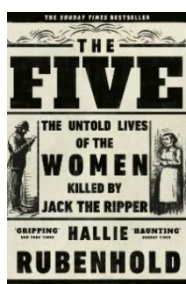
The seat of the Trelawney family for over 800 years, Trelawney Castle was once the jewel of the Cornish coast. Recent generations have been better at spending than making money. Three unexpected events will hasten their demise: the sudden appearance of a new relation, an illegitimate, headstrong, beautiful girl; an unscrupulous American hedge fund manager determined to exact revenge; and the crash of 2008. A love story and social satire set in the seemingly unconnected worlds of the British aristocracy and high finance.

Hannah ROTHSCHILD **Improbability of love** (2015, 479 pages)



When lovelorn Annie McDee stumbles across a dirty painting in a junk shop while looking for a present for an unsuitable man, she has no idea what she has discovered. Soon she finds herself drawn unwillingly into the tumultuous London art world, populated by exiled Russian oligarchs, avaricious Sheikas, desperate auctioneers and unscrupulous dealers, all scheming to get their hands on her painting - a lost eighteenth-century masterpiece called 'The Improbability of Love'. Annie will uncover not just an illustrious list of former owners, but some of the darkest secrets of European history. *Winner of the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize for Comic Fiction 2016, shortlisted for the Bailey's Prize 2016*

Helen RUBENHOLD **The Five – The Untold Lives of the Women killed by Jack The Ripper** (2019, 415 pages NF)



Polly, Annie, Elizabeth, Catherine, and Mary-Jane are famous for the same thing, though they never met. They came from Fleet Street, Knightsbridge, Wolverhampton, Sweden, and Wales. They wrote ballads, ran coffee houses, lived on country estates, they breathed ink-dust from printing presses and escaped people-traffickers. What they had in common was the year of their murders: 1888. In this devastating narrative of five lives, historian Hallie Rubenhold finally sets the record straight, and gives these women back their stories. **Winner of the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non Fiction.**

Katherine RUNDELL – Super-infinite – The transformations of John Donne (2022, 344 pages NF)

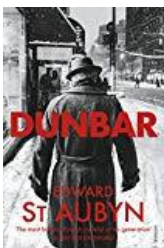


Sometime religious outsider and social disaster, sometime celebrity preacher and establishment darling, John Donne was incapable of being just one thing. In his myriad lives he was a scholar of law, a sea adventurer, a priest, an MP - and perhaps the greatest love poet in the history of the English language. Along the way he converted from Catholicism to Protestantism, was imprisoned for marrying a sixteen-year old girl without her father's consent; struggled to feed a family of ten children; and was often ill and in pain. He was a man who suffered from black surges of misery, yet expressed in his verse many breathtaking impressions of electric joy and love. **Winner of the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction**

Salman RUSHDIE – Midnight's Children (2008 [1980], 464 pages)

Saleem Sinai was born at midnight, the midnight of India's independence, and found himself mysteriously 'handcuffed to history' by the coincidence. He is one of 1,001 children born at the midnight hour, each of them endowed with an extraordinary talent - and whose privilege and curse it is to be both master and victims of their times. Through Saleem's gifts - inner ear and wildly sensitive sense of smell - we are drawn into a fascinating family saga set against the vast, colourful background of the India of the 20th century.

Edward ST. AUBYN – Dunbar (2017, 213 pages)

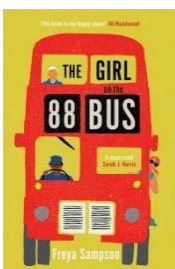


Henry Dunbar, the once all-powerful head of a global corporation, is not having a good day. In his dotage he handed over care of the family firm to his two eldest daughters, Abby and Megan. But relations quickly soured, leaving him doubting the wisdom of past decisions. Now imprisoned in a care home in the Lake District with only a demented alcoholic comedian as company, Dunbar starts planning his escape. As he flees into the hills, his family is hot on his heels. *Contemporary re-telling of King Lear in the Hogarth Shakespeare series*

J. D. SALINGER – The Catcher in the Rye (1951, 208 pages)

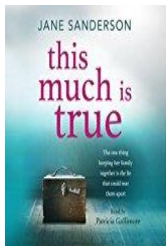
The Catcher in Rye is the ultimate novel for disaffected youth of all ages. The story is told by Holden Caulfield, a seventeen-year-old dropout who has just been kicked out of his fourth school. Throughout, Holden dissects the 'phony' aspects of society, and the 'phonies' themselves: the headmaster whose affability depends on the wealth of the parents, his roommate who scores with girls using sickly-sweet affection.

Freya SAMPSON – The Girl on the 88 Bus (2022, 385p)



When Libby Nicholls arrives in London, broken-hearted and with her life in tatters, the first person she meets on the bus is elderly pensioner Frank. He tells her about the time in 1962 he met a girl on the number 88 bus with beautiful red hair just like her own. They made plans for a date at the National Gallery, but Frank lost the ticket with her number written on it. For the past 60 years, he's ridden the same bus trying to find her. Libby is inspired by the story and, with the help of an unlikely companion, she makes it her mission to continue Frank's search.

Jane SANDERSON **This much is true** (2017, 405 pages)

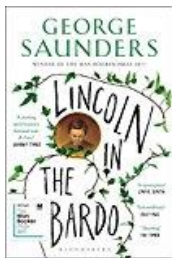


Annie Doyle's husband, Vince, is in a care home with final-stage dementia. And after decades of deeply unhappy marriage, Annie can barely bring herself to care. But as the family gathers to see out Vince's final days, he utters a single word that will change the entire family forever: 'Martha'. Who is Martha? And why is Annie so quick to dismiss the mention of her name? Annie's past is finally about to collide with her present, and there's no one - family member, friend, even her loyal dog, Finn - who won't be shaken to the core by her long-held secrets.

Sathnam SANGHERA **Marriage Material** (2014, 320 pages)

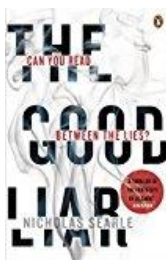
To Arjan Banga, returning to the Black Country after the unexpected death of his father, his family's corner shop represents everything he has tried to leave behind – a lethargic pace of life, insular rituals and ways of thinking. But when his mother insists on keeping the shop open, he finds himself being dragged back, forced into big decisions about his imminent marriage back in London and uncovering the history of his broken family – the elopement and mixed-race marriage of his aunt Surinder, the betrayals and loyalties, loves and regrets that have played out in the shop over more than fifty years.

George SAUNDERS **Lincoln in the Bardo** (2017, 341 pages)



February 1862. The Civil War is less than one year old. President Lincoln's beloved 11-year-old son, Willie, lies upstairs in the White House, gravely ill. In a matter of days, despite predictions of a recovery, Willie dies and is laid to rest in a Georgetown cemetery. "My poor boy, he was too good for this earth," the president says at the time. God has called him home. Newspapers report that a grief-stricken Lincoln returned to the crypt several times alone to hold his boy's body. From that seed of historical truth, George Saunders spins a story of familial love and loss. Winner of *the Man Booker Prize 2017*.

Nicholas SEARLE **The Good liar** (2016, 272 pages)

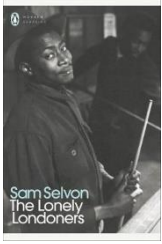


When Roy meets a wealthy widow online, he can hardly believe his luck. Just like Patricia Highsmith's Tom Ripley, Roy is a man who lives to deceive - and everything about Betty suggests she's an easy mark. He's confident that his scheme to swindle her will be a success. After all, he's done this before. Sure enough, Betty soon lets Roy move into her beautiful home, seemingly blind to the web of lies he's woven around her. But who is Roy, really? Spanning almost a century, this stunning and suspenseful feat of storytelling interweaves the present with the past. As the clock turns back and the years fall away, long-hidden secrets are forced into the light.

Asne SEIERSTAD **The Bookseller of Kabul (Non-Fiction)** (2003, 288 pages)

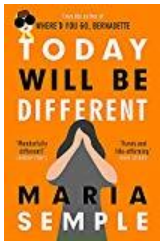
Two weeks after September 11th, award-winning journalist Asne Seierstad went to Afghanistan to report on the conflict. In the following spring she returned to live with a bookseller and his family for several months. *The Bookseller of Kabul* is the fascinating account of her time spent living with the family of thirteen in their four-roomed home. Bookseller Sultan Khan defied the authorities for twenty years to supply books to the people of Kabul. But while Khan is passionate in his love of books and hatred of censorship, he is also a committed Muslim with strict views on family life. As an outsider, Seierstad is able to move between the private world of the women - including Khan's two wives - and the more public lives of the men. (*translated from Norwegian*)

Samuel SELVON The Lonely Londoners ([1956] 2006, 138 pages)



At Waterloo Station, hopeful new arrivals from the West Indies step off the boat train, ready to start afresh in 1950s London. There, homesick Moses Aloetta, who has already lived in the city for years, meets Henry 'Sir Galahad' Oliver and shows him the ropes. In this strange, cold and foggy city where the natives can be less than friendly at the sight of a black face, has Galahad met his Waterloo? But the irrepressible newcomer cannot be cast down. A classic novel of immigrant life in London in the 1950s.

Maria SEMPLE Today will be different (2016, 259 pages)



Eleanor Flood knows she's a mess. But today will be different. Today she will shower and put on real clothes. She will attend her yoga class after dropping her son, Timby, off at school. She'll see an old friend for lunch. But before she can put her modest plan into action - life happens. For today is the day Timby has decided to pretend to be ill to weasel his way into his mother's company. It's also the day surgeon Joe has chosen to tell his receptionist - but not Eleanor - that he's on vacation. And just when it seems that things can't go more awry, a former colleague produces a relic from the past - a graphic memoir with pages telling of family secrets long buried and a sister to whom Eleanor never speaks.

Jan-Philipp SENDKER The Art of Hearing Heartbeats (2013, 325 pages)

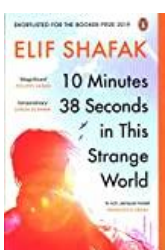
A poignant and inspirational love story set in Burma, 'The Art of Hearing Heartbeats' spans the decades between the 1950s and the present. When a successful New York lawyer suddenly disappears without a trace, neither his wife nor his daughter Julia has any idea where he might be - until they find a love letter he wrote many years ago, to a Burmese woman they have never heard of. Intent on solving the mystery and coming to terms with her father's past, Julia decides to travel to the village where the woman lived. There she uncovers a tale of unimaginable hardship, resilience, and passion that will change her life once more. (2013, 336 pages) *(translated from German)*

Diane SETTERFIELD Once upon a river (2018, 527 pages)



On a dark midwinter's night in an ancient inn on the Thames, the regulars are entertaining themselves by telling stories when the door bursts open and in steps an injured stranger. In his arms is the drowned corpse of a child. Hours later, the dead girl stirs, takes a breath and returns to life. Is it a miracle? Is it magic? And who does the little girl belong to?

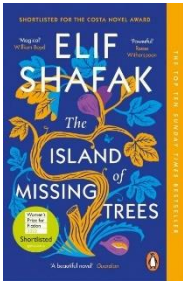
Elif SHAFAK 10 minutes 38 seconds in this strange world (2019, 311 pages)



For Leila, each minute after her death brings a sensuous memory: the taste of spiced goat stew, sacrificed by her father to celebrate the long-awaited birth of a son; the sight of bubbling vats of lemon and sugar which the women use to wax their legs while the men attend mosque; the scent of cardamom coffee that Leila shares with a handsome student in the brothel where she works. Each memory, too, recalls the friends she made at each key moment in her life - friends who are now desperately trying to find her. . . *Shortlisted for the Booker Prize 2019*

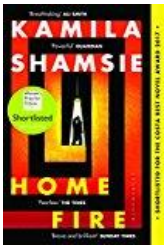
Elif SHAFAK

The Island of Missing Trees (2021, 355 pages)



974, on the island of Cyprus. Two teenagers, from opposite sides of a divided land, meet at a tavern in the city they both call home. The tavern is the only place that Kostas, who is Greek and Christian, and Defne, who is Turkish and Muslim, can meet, in secret. But there is something else to the place: it makes one forget, even if for just a few hours, the world outside and its immoderate sorrows. Elif Shafak brings us a magical tale of belonging and identity, love and trauma, memory and amnesia, destruction of nature, and, finally, renewal.

Kamila SHAMSIE Home fire (2017, 264 pages)



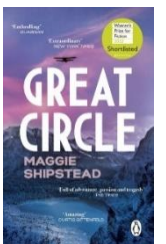
Isma is free. After years of watching out for her younger siblings in the wake of their mother's death, she's accepted an invitation from a mentor in America that allows her to resume a dream long deferred. But she can't stop worrying about Aneeka, her beautiful, headstrong sister back in London, or their brother, Parvaiz, who's disappeared in pursuit of his own dream, to prove himself to the dark legacy of the jihadist father he never knew. When he resurfaces half a globe away, Isma's worst fears are confirmed. Then Eamonn enters the sisters' lives. Son of a powerful political figure, he has his own birthright to live up to - or defy. Is he to be a chance at love? The means of Parvaiz's salvation? Suddenly, two families' fates are inextricably, devastatingly entwined. *Winner of the Women's Prize 2018 and longlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2017.*

Lee Margot SHETTERLY Hidden figures (Non-Fiction) (2016, 348 pages)



Set amid the civil rights movement, the never-before-told true story of NASA's African-American female mathematicians who played a crucial role in America's space programme.

Maggie SHIPSTEAD – Great Circle (2021, 672 pages)



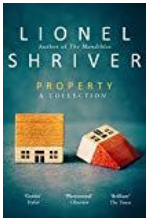
Marian Graves has always been marked by a lust for freedom and danger. In 1950, she embarks on her life's dream - to fly a Great Circle around the globe, pole to pole. After a crash landing she finds herself stranded on the Antarctic ice without enough fuel. She writes one last entry in her logbook. She is ready for her final journey. Half a century later, a brilliant, Hollywood starlet is drawn to play Marian Graves, a role that will lead her to probe the deepest mysteries of the vanished pilot's life. **Shortlisted for the Womens prize for fiction,**

Anita SHREVE

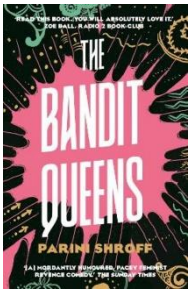
The Lives of Stella Bain (2013, 304 pages)



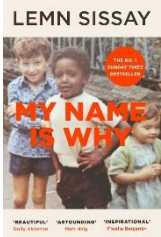
When an American woman, Stella Bain, is found suffering from severe shell shock in an exclusive garden in London, surgeon August Bridge and his wife selflessly agree to take her in. A gesture of goodwill turns into something more as Bridge quickly develops a clinical interest in his houseguest. Stella had been working as a nurse's aide near the front, but she can't remember anything prior to four months earlier when she was found wounded on a French battlefield. In a narrative that takes us from London to America and back again, this is a tale about love and the meaning of memory.

Lionel SHRIVER**Property: a collection (Short stories)** (2018, 317 pages)

Intermingling settings in America and Britain, Lionel Shriver's first collection explores property in both senses of the word: real estate and stuff. These pieces illustrate how our possessions act as proxies for ourselves, and how tussles over ownership articulate the power dynamics of our relationships. In Lionel Shriver's world, we may possess people and objects and places, but in turn they possess us.

Parini SHROFF**The Bandit Queens (2023, 416 pages)**

For Geeta, life as a widow is more peaceful than life as a wife. Until the other women in her village decide they want to be widows, too. Geeta is believed to have killed her vanished husband - a rumour she hasn't bothered trying to correct, because a reputation like that can keep a single woman safe in rural India. But when she's approached for help in ridding another wife of her abusive drunk of a husband, her reluctant agreement sets in motion a chain of events that will change the lives of all the women in the village. **Radio 2 Book Club Choice**

Lemn SISSAY**My name is why (Non-Fiction)** (2019, 212 pages)

At the age of seventeen, after a childhood in an adopted family followed by six years in care homes, Norman Greenwood was given his birth certificate. He learned that his real name was not Norman. It was Lemn Sissay. He was British and Ethiopian. And he learned that his mother had been pleading for his safe return to her since his birth. Here Sissay recounts his life story. It is a story of neglect and determination. Misfortune and hope. Cruelty and beauty. Sissay reflects on adoption, self-expression and Britishness, and in doing so explores the institutional care system, race, family and the meaning of home.

Curtis SITTFELD**You think it, I'll say it (Short stories)** (2019, 271 pages)

The theme that unites these stories is how even the cleverest people tend to misread others, and how much we all deceive ourselves. They show Sittenfeld's knack for creating real, believable characters that spring off the page, while also skewering contemporary mores with brilliant dry wit.

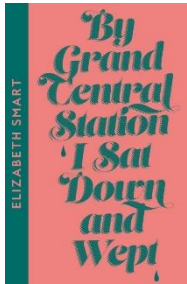
Nigel SLATER**Toast: The Story of a Boy's Hunger (Biography)** (2003, 247 pages)

When Nigel's widowed father takes on a housekeeper with social aspirations and a talent in the kitchen, the following years become a heartbreaking cooking contest for his father's affections. But as he slowly loses the battle, Nigel finds a new outlet for his culinary talents, and we witness the birth of what was to become a lifelong passion for food. An incredibly moving and deliciously evocative memoir of childhood, adolescence and sexual awakening.

Gillian SLOVO *Black Orchids* (2008, 384 pages)

When the genteelly impoverished and rebellious Evelyn marries the charming Emil, scion of a privileged Sinhalese family, she thinks that her dream of a life in England can now at last come true. So the family travel, with their young son Milton, from Ceylon to Tilbury Docks. But this is England in the 1950s and, no matter how hard Evelyn wishes that it would, England does not take kindly to strangers, especially families who are half black and half white. A profound and moving novel, this is the story about the search to feel at home in your own skin.

Elizabeth SMART – *By Grand Central Station I sat down and wept* (1945, 112pages)



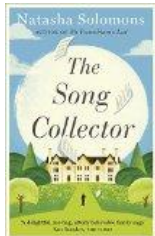
Whilst browsing in a London bookshop, Elizabeth Smart chanced upon a slim volume of poetry by George Barker - and fell passionately in love with him through the printed word. Eventually they communicated directly and, as a result of Barker's impecunious circumstances, Elizabeth Smart fled both him and his wife from Japan, where he was teaching, to join her in the United States. Thus began one of the most extraordinary, intense and ultimately tragic love affairs of our time. They never married but Elizabeth bore George Barker four children and their relationship provided the impassioned

inspiration for one of the most moving and immediate chronicles of a love affair ever written.

Zadie SMITH *NW* (2013, 352 pages)

Zadie Smith's brilliant tragi-comic *NW* follows four Londoners - Leah, Natalie, Felix and Nathan - after they've left their childhood council estate, grown up and moved on to different lives. From private houses to public parks, at work and at play, their city is brutal, beautiful and complicated. Yet after a chance encounter they each find that the choices they've made, the people they once were and are now, can suddenly, rapidly unravel.

Natasha SOLOMONS *The Song collector* (2015, 389 pages)



Fox, as the celebrated composer Harry Fox-Talbot is known, wants to be left in peace. His beloved wife has died, he's unable to write a note of music, and no, he does not want to take up some blasted hobby. Then one day he discovers that his troublesome four-year-old grandson is a piano prodigy. The music returns and Fox is compelled to re-engage with life - and, ultimately, to confront an old family rift.

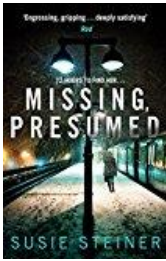
Muriel SPARK *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961, 144 pages)

When an unbridled schoolmistress with advanced ideas is in her prime the classroom can take on a new identity and no one can predict what will happen. Jean Brodie is a teacher whose unconventional ideas put her at odds with the other members of staff at the Marcia Blaine School in Edinburgh, as she endeavours to shape the lives of the select group of girls who form her "set".

John STEINBECK *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939, 528 pages)

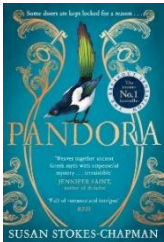
Set against the background of Dust Bowl Oklahoma and Californian migrant life, it tells of Tom Joad and his family, who, like thousands of others, are forced to travel west in search of the promised land. Their story is one of false hopes, thwarted desires and broken dreams, yet out of their suffering Steinbeck created a drama that is intensely human, yet majestic in its scale and moral vision.

Susie STEINER **Missing, presumed** (2016, 416 pages)



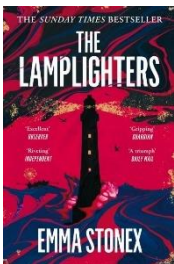
A missing girl - Edith Hind is gone, leaving just her coat, a smear of blood and a half-open door. A desperate family - each of her friends and relatives has a version of the truth. But none quite adds up. A detective at breaking point - the press grows hungrier by the day. Can DS Manon Bradshaw fend them off, before a missing persons case becomes a murder investigation? *A Richard and Judy Summer 2016 book choice.*

Susan STOKES-CHAPMAN **Pandora** (2022, 352 pages)



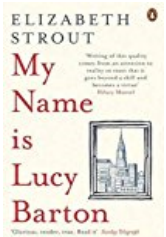
London, 1799. Dora Blake is an aspiring jewellery artist who lives with her uncle in what used to be her parents' famed shop of antiquities. When a mysterious Greek vase is delivered, Dora is intrigued by her uncle's suspicious behaviour and enlists the help of Edward Lawrence, a young antiquarian scholar. Edward sees the ancient vase as key to unlocking his academic future. Dora sees it as a chance to restore the shop to its former glory, and to escape her nefarious uncle. But what Edward discovers about the vase has Dora questioning everything she has believed about her life, her family, and the world as she knows it.

Emma STONEX **The Lamplighters** (2021, 357 pages)



A heart-stopping novel inspired by true events, 'The Lamplighters' is the story of three men who vanish from a remote lighthouse. The entrance door is locked from the inside, the clocks have all stopped and the table is set for dinner. Twenty years later, the mystery of their disappearance still haunts the heartbroken women left behind. The sea has kept its secrets, until now.

Elizabeth STROUT **My name is Lucy Barton** (2016, 193 pages)



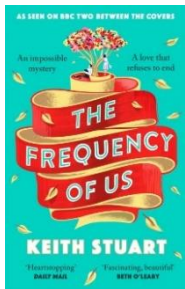
Lucy Barton is recovering slowly from what should have been a simple operation. Her mother, to whom she hasn't spoken for many years, comes to see her. Gentle gossip about people from Lucy's childhood in Amgash, Illinois, seems to reconnect them, but just below the surface lie the tension and longing that have informed every aspect of Lucy's life: her escape from her troubled family, her desire to become a writer, her marriage, her love for her two daughters. Knitting this powerful narrative together is the voice of Lucy herself.

Douglas STUART **Shuggie Bain** (2020, 430 pages)



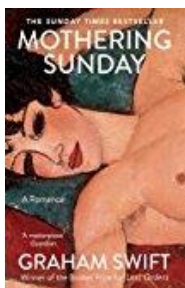
Agnes Bain has always expected more from life. She dreams of greater things: a house with its own front door and a life bought and paid for outright. But Agnes is abandoned by her philandering husband, and soon she and her three children find themselves trapped in a decimated mining town. As she descends deeper into drink, the children try their best to save her, yet one by one they must abandon her to save themselves. It is her son Shuggie who holds out hope the longest. Shuggie is different. Fastidious and fussy, he shares his mother's sense of snobbish propriety. *Winner of the Booker Prize for Fiction 2020*

Keith STUART – The frequency of us (2021, 399 pages)



Second World War, wireless engineer Will meets German refugee Elsa Klein and at last his life seems to make sense - until, soon after, the newly married couple's home is bombed, and Will awakes from the wreckage to find himself alone. Seventy years later, Social worker, Laura has a new case. An isolated old man whose house hasn't changed since the war. A man who insists his wife vanished many, many years before. Everyone thinks he's suffering dementia. But Laura begins to suspect otherwise.

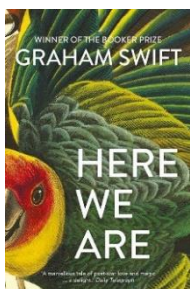
Graham SWIFT Mothering Sunday (2016, 160 pages)



Twenty-two year old Jane Fairchild has worked as a maid at one English country estate since she was sixteen. And for almost all of those years she has been the secret lover to Paul Sheringham, the scion of the estate next door. On a warm March afternoon, Jane and Paul will make love for the last time--though not, as Jane believes, because Paul is about to be married--and the events of the day will alter Jane's life forever. As the narrative moves back and forth from 1924 to the end of the century, what we know and understand about Jane--about the way she loves, thinks, feels, sees, remembers--deepens with every beautifully wrought moment. **Shortlisted for the Walter**

Scott prize for historical fiction

Graham SWIFT Here We Are (2020, 195 pages)



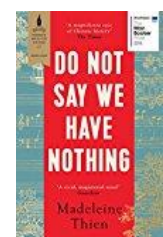
Brighton, 1959, and the theatre at the end of the pier is having its best summer season in years. Ronnie, a brilliant young magician, and Evie, his dazzling assistant, are top of the bill, drawing audiences each night. Meanwhile, Jack Robinson, is everyone's favourite compere, a born entertainer, holding the whole show together. As the summer progresses, the off-stage drama between the three begins to overshadow their theatrical success, and events unfold which will have lasting consequences for all their futures. Rich, comic, alive and subtly devastating, 'Here We Are' is a masterly

piece of literary magicianship

Twan Eng TAN The Garden of Evening Mists (2013, 352 pages)

Set in the 1950s, in the highlands of Malaya, a woman sets out to build a memorial to her sister, killed at the hands of the Japanese during the brutal Occupation of their country. Yun Ling's quest leads her to The Garden of Evening Mists, and to Aritomo, a man of extraordinary skill and reputation, once the gardener of the Emperor of Japan. When she accepts his offer to become his apprentice, she begins a journey into her past, inextricably linked with the secrets of her troubled country's history.

Madeleine THIEN Do not say we have nothing (2016, 480 pages)



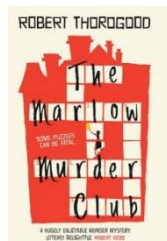
Ai-Ming tells the story of her family in revolutionary China, from the crowded teahouses in the first days of Chairman Mao's ascent to the events leading to the Beijing demonstrations of 1989. It is a history of revolutionary idealism, music and silence, in which three musicians - the shy and brilliant composer, Sparrow; the violin prodigy, Zhuli; and the enigmatic pianist, Kai - struggle during China's relentless Cultural Revolution to remain loyal to one another and to the music they have devoted their lives to. **Shortlisted for the 2016 Man**

Booker prize.

Flora THOMPSON **Lark Rise to Candleford – A trilogy** (1945, 560 pages)



This trilogy, based on Flora Thompson's own experiences during childhood and youth, tells the story of three closely related Oxfordshire communities. It chronicles May Day celebrations and the daily lives of craftsmen, friends and relations.



Robert THOROGOOD **The Marlow Murder Club** (2021, 338 pages)

Judith Potts is 77 years old and blissfully happy. She lives on her own in a faded mansion just outside Marlow - there's no man in her life to tell her what to do or how much whisky to drink, and to keep herself busy she sets crosswords for The Times newspaper. One evening, while out swimming in the Thames, Judith witnesses a brutal murder. Unconvinced by the police's attempts to uncover who did it, she starts investigating, and soon hooks up with the salt-of-the-earth Suzie, a local dogwalker, and Becks, the Vicar's perfect Home Counties' wife. Together, they are the Marlow Murder Club.

Gillian TINDALL **The House by the Thames (Non-Fiction)** (2006, 258 pages)

Just across the River Thames from St Paul's Cathedral stands an old house. It is the last genuine survivor of what was once a long ribbon of elegant houses overlooking the water. Built in the days of Queen Anne, it stands in the footprint of a far older habitation. Over the course of almost 450 years the dwelling on this site has seen changes on the river and in the city on the opposite bank. Rich with anecdote and colour, empathetic, scholarly and textured, "The House by the Thames" is social history at its most enjoyable. Gillian Tindall excels at description and at picking out the most fascinating details. She breathes life into the forgotten names of individuals who were as passionate in their time as we ourselves – and in so doing makes them stand for legions of others and for whole worlds that we have lost

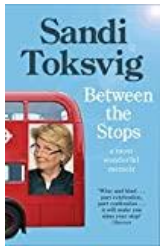
Colm TOIBIN **The Master** (2004, 200 pages)

It is January 1895 and Henry James's play, *Guy Domville*, from which he hoped to make his fortune, has failed on the London stage. Opening with this disaster, *The Master* spans the next five years of James's life, during which time he moves to Rye in Sussex where he writes his short masterpiece *The Turn of the Screw*, a tale in which he incorporates many details from his own life, including his experiences as a member of one of the great eccentric American families and, later, an exile in England. Impelled by the need to work and haunted by his past – including his failure to fight in the American Civil War, and the golden summer of 1865, and the death of his sister Alice – James is watchful and witty, relishing the England in which he has come to live and regretting the England he has left.

Colm TOIBIN **The Testament of Mary** (2013, 112 pages)

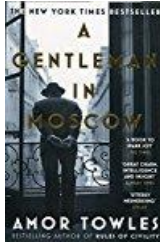
The Testament of Mary tells the story of a cataclysmic event which led to an overpowering grief. For Mary, her son has been lost to the world, and now, living in exile and in fear, she tries to piece together the memories of the events that led to her son's brutal death. To her he was a vulnerable figure, surrounded by men who could not be trusted, living in a time of turmoil and change. As her life and her suffering begin to acquire the resonance of myth, Mary struggles to break the silence surrounding what she knows to have happened.

Sandi TOKSVIG *Between the stops: the view of my life from the top of the number 12 bus (Non-Fiction) (2019, 320 pages)*



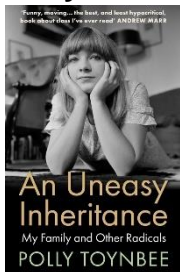
This is Sandi Toksvig's autobiography - part memoir, part diary, part travelogue and History, all from the top of a double-decker bus!

Amor TOWLES *A gentleman in Moscow (2017, 462 pages)*



In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, and is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel's doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him entry into a much larger world of emotional discovery.

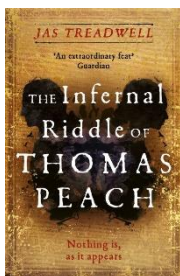
Polly TOYNBEE *An Uneasy Inheritance (2023, 436 pages Non Fiction)*



While for generations Polly Toynbee's ancestors have been committed left-wing rabble-rousers railing against injustice, they could never claim to be working class, settling instead for the prosperous life of academia or journalism enjoyed by their own forebears. So where does that leave their ideals of class equality? Through a colourful, entertaining examination of her own family - which in addition to her writer father Philip and her historian grandfather Arnold contains everyone from the Glenconners to Jessica Mitford to Bertrand Russell, and features ancestral home Castle Howard as a backdrop - Toynbee

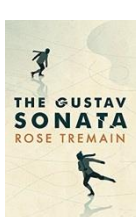
explores the myth of mobility, the guilt of privilege, and asks for a truly honest conversation about class in Britain.

Jas TREADWELL *The Infernal Riddle of Thomas Peach (2022, 462 pages)*



1785. Thomas Peach, moves to a small village in the West Country, bringing with him a steamer chest of clothes, some books - and, apparently, his wife, Mrs Peach, who quickly becomes a source of fascination and suspicion to the villagers. Why is she never seen abroad? Why does Mr Peach refuse entry to her bedroom to their maidservant, who is unable to detect even a whisper of breath at Mrs Peach's door, try as she might?

Rose TREMAIN *The Gustav Sonata (2016, 308 pages)*



What is the difference between friendship and love? Or between neutrality and commitment? Gustav Perle grows up in a small town in 'neutral' Switzerland, where the horrors of the Second World War seem a distant echo. But Gustav's father has mysteriously died, and his adored mother Emilie is strangely cold and indifferent to him. Gustav's childhood is spent in lonely isolation, his only toy a tin train with painted passengers staring blankly from the carriage windows. As time goes on, an intense friendship with a boy of his own age, Anton Zwiebel, begins to define Gustav's life. Jewish and mercurial, a talented pianist tortured by nerves when he has to play in public, Anton fails to understand how deeply and irrevocably his life and Gustav's are entwined. *Shortlisted for the Bailey's, Costa, Walter Scott and Ondaatje Prizes.*

Rose TREMAIN The Road Home (2008, 384 pages)

The tale of Lev, a middle aged Polish migrant worker, who comes to London after losing both his job and his wife, is both moving and funny. It's a marvellous take on modern Britain where foreign workers on scant wages toil away in the kitchens of posh restaurants in London and asparagus fields in Norfolk, whilst at the other end of the scale celebrity culture rules. Lev is a good man and a heroic hard worker. As he struggles to earn enough money to send home to his mother who looks after his little girl, he is helped by unexpected acts of kindness from a cast of diverse and entirely unclined characters.

Rose TREMAIN Trespass (2010, 384 pages)

In a silent valley stands an isolated stone farmhouse, the Mas Lunel. Its owner is Aramon Lunel, an alcoholic so haunted by his violent past that he's become incapable of all meaningful action. Meanwhile, his sister, Audrun, alone in her modern bungalow within sight of the Mas Lunel, dreams of exacting retribution for the unspoken betrayals that have blighted her life. Into this closed Cevenol world comes Anthony Verey, a wealthy but disillusioned antiques dealer from London. Now in his sixties, Anthony hopes to remake his life in France, and he begins looking at properties in the region. From the moment he arrives at the Mas Lunel, a frightening and unstoppable series of consequences is set in motion. Two worlds and two cultures collide. Ancient boundaries are crossed, taboos are broken, a violent crime is committed. And all the time the Cevennes hills remain, as cruel and seductive as ever, unforgettably captured in this powerful and unsettling novel.

Liz TRENOW The Silk weaver (2017, 416 pages)

Anna Butterfield moves from her Suffolk country home to her uncle's house in London, to be introduced to society. A chance encounter with a local silk weaver, French immigrant Henri, throws her from her privileged upbringing to the darker, dangerous world of London's silk trade. Henri is working on his 'master piece' to make his name as a master silk weaver; Anna, meanwhile, is struggling against the constraints of her family and longing to become an artist. Henri realizes that Anna's designs could lift his work above the ordinary and give them both an opportunity for freedom.... This is a charming story of illicit romance, set against the world of the burgeoning silk trade in 18th-century Spitalfields.

William TREVOR Fools of fortune ([1983] 2015, 214 pages)



The Quintons have lived in the old house in Cork for hundreds of years. Though Anglo-Irish Protestant, they sympathize with the cause of independence and secretly fund Michael Collins' fighters. But one of their workers is an informer to the British, and when he's murdered on their land, though they know nothing of it, the Black and Tans come seeking revenge. Till now young Willy Quinton has led a pleasant, cosseted life. But the murder of his father and sisters by British soldiers brings him to a point when he can only contemplate revenge himself.

He sets off for Liverpool with hatred in his heart. Will he survive? Will the cycle ever be broken? *Winner of the Whitbread Prize in 1983*

Anthony TROLLOPE The Warden (2012 [1855], 256 pages)

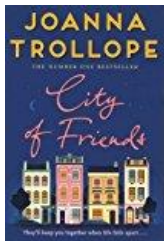
Trollope's witty, satirical story of a quiet cathedral town shaken by scandal - as the traditional values of Septimus Harding are attacked by zealous reformers and ruthless newspapers - is a drama of conscience that pits individual integrity against worldly ambition. In *The Warden* Anthony Trollope brought the fictional county of Bassetshire to life, peopled by a cast of brilliantly realised characters that have made him among the supreme chroniclers of the minutiae of Victorian England.

Anthony TROLLOPE **The Way we live now** ([1875] 2012, 800 pages)



An unscrupulous Victorian lady exploits all available means to further the financial and social aspirations of her knavish son who plans to marry the daughter of a wealthy swindler.

Joanna TROLLOPE **City of friends** (2017, 326 pages)



The day Stacey Grant loses her job feels like the last day of her life. For who was she if not a City high-flyer, Senior Partner at one of the top private equity firms in London? As Stacey starts to reconcile her old life with the new - one without professional achievements or meetings, but instead, long days at home with her dog and ailing mother, waiting for her successful husband to come home - she at least has The Girls to fall back on. Beth, Melissa and Gaby, best friends from the early days of university right through their working lives, and for all the happiness and heartbreaks in between. But these career women all have personal problems of their own, and when Stacey's redundancy forces a betrayal to emerge that was supposed to remain secret, their long cherished friendships will be pushed to their limits . . .

Joanna TROLLOPE **Mum & Dad** (2020, 324 pages)

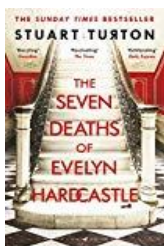


It's been 25 years since Gus and Monica left England to start a new life in Spain, building a vineyard and wine business from the ground up. However, when Gus suffers a stroke and their idyllic Mediterranean life is thrown into upheaval, it's left to their three grown-up children in London to step in. As they children descend on the vineyard, it becomes clear that each has their own idea of how best to handle their mum and dad, as well as the family business. But as long-simmering resentments rise to the surface and tensions reach breaking point, can the family ties prove strong enough to keep them together? *A Richard and Judy Christmas 2020 choice*

TURL STREET Writers **Turl Street Tales** (2008, 132 pages)

Take a new group of clever writers, shut them up in a box of innovative brilliance, called the QI club, and see what they can create. The result is a book of Oxford stories, a collection of short pieces, romance and crime, comedy and non-fiction, poetry and even a couple of ghost stories, all set in the historic Turl Street, Oxford.

Stuart TURTON **The Seven deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle** (2018, 507 pages)



Tonight, Evelyn Hardcastle will be killed ... again.

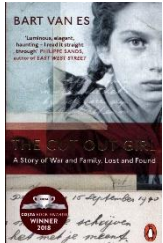
It is meant to be a celebration but it ends in tragedy. As fireworks explode overhead, Evelyn Hardcastle, the young and beautiful daughter of the house, is killed. But Evelyn will not die just once. Until Aiden - one of the guests summoned to Blackheath for the party - can solve her murder, the day will repeat itself, over and over again. Every time ending with the fateful pistol shot.

The only way to break this cycle is to identify the killer. But each time the day begins again, Aiden wakes in the body of a different guest. And someone is determined to prevent him ever escaping Blackheath... *Winner of the Costa First Novel Award 2018*

Anne TYLER *The Beginner's Goodbye* (2013, 176 pages)

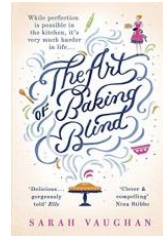
When Dorothy came back from the dead, it seemed to Aaron that some people simply didn't notice. The accident that killed Dorothy - involving an oak tree, a sun porch and some elusive biscuits - leaves Aaron bereft and the house a wreck. As those around him fuss and flap and bring him casserole after casserole, Aaron ploughs on. But then Dorothy starts to materialize in the oddest places. At first, she only comes for a short while, leaving Aaron longing for more. Gradually she stays for longer, and as they talk, they also bicker and the cracks that were present in their perfectly ordinary marriage start to reappear...

Bart VAN ES *The Cut out girl: a story of war and family, lost and found (Non-Fiction)* (2018, 280 pages)



The last time Lien saw her parents was in the Hague when she was collected at the door by a stranger and taken to a city far away to be hidden from the Nazis. She was raised by her foster family as one of their own, but a falling out well after the war meant they were no longer in touch. What was her side of the story, Bart van Es - a grandson of the couple who looked after Lien - wondered? What really happened during the war, and after? So began an investigation that would consume and transform both Bart van Es's life and Lien's.

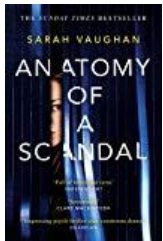
Sarah VAUGHAN *The Art of baking blind* (2014, 406 pages)



In 1966, Kathleen Eaden, published *The Art of Baking*, her guide to nurturing a family by creating the most exquisite pastries, biscuits and cakes. Now, five amateur bakers are competing to become the New Mrs Eaden. There's Jenny, facing an empty nest now her family has flown; Claire, who has sacrificed her dreams for her daughter; Mike, trying to parent his two kids after his wife's death; Vicki, who has dropped everything to be at home with her baby boy; and Karen, perfect Karen, who knows what it's like to have nothing and is

determined her façade shouldn't slip. As unlikely alliances are forged and secrets rise to the surface, making the choicest choux bun seems the least of the contestants' problems.

Sarah VAUGHAN *Anatomy of a scandal* (2018, 396 pages)



A high-profile marriage thrust into the spotlight. A wife, determined to keep her family safe, must face a prosecutor who believes justice has been a long time coming. A scandal that will rock Westminster. And the women caught at the heart of it.

This novel centres on a high-profile marriage that begins to unravel when the husband is accused of a terrible crime. Sophie is sure her husband, James, is innocent and desperately hopes to protect her precious family from the lies which might ruin them. Kate is the barrister who will prosecute the case – she is equally certain that James is guilty and determined he will pay for his crimes.

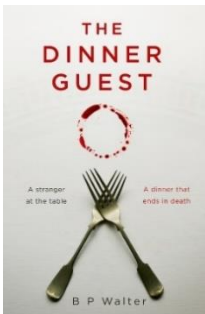
Salley VICKERS *The Cleaner of Chartres* (2013, 304 pages)

There is something special about the ancient cathedral of Chartres, with its mismatched spires, astonishing stained glass and strange labyrinth and there is something special too about Agnès Morel, the mysterious woman who is to be found cleaning it each morning. No one quite knows where she came from - not the diffident Abbé Paul, who discovered her one morning twenty years ago, sleeping in the north porch, nor lonely Professor Jones, whose chaotic existence she helps to organise, nor even the irreverent young restorer, Alain Fleury, who works alongside her each day and whose attention she catches with her tawny eyes, her colourful clothes and elusive manner. Yet everyone she encounters would surely agree that she is subtly transforming their lives.

Salley VICKERS **The Other Side of You** (2006, 262 pages)

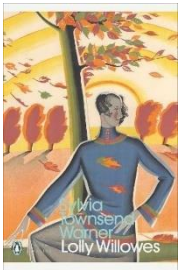
As a young child, Dr. David McBride witnessed the death of his six-year-old brother and this traumatic event has shaped his own personality and choice of profession. One day, a failed suicide, Elizabeth Cruikshank, is admitted to his hospital. She is unusually reticent and it is not until he recalls a painting by Caravaggio that she finally yields up her story. As her story unfolds, David finds his own life being touched by her account and a haunting sense that the 'other side' of his elusive patient has a strange resonance for him, too. Set partly in Rome, *The Other Side of You* explores the theme of redemption through love and art. This is a many-layered and subtly audacious story, which traces the boundaries of life and death and the difficult possibilities of repentance.

B. P. WALTER **The Dinner Guest** (2021, 404 pages)



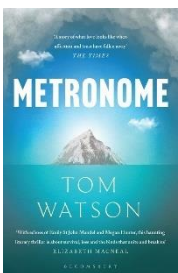
Four people walked into the dining room that night. One would never leave. Matthew: the perfect husband. Titus: the perfect son. Charlie: the perfect illusion. Rachel: the perfect stranger. Charlie didn't want her at the book club. Matthew wouldn't listen. And that's how Charlie finds himself slumped beside his husband's body, their son sitting silently at the dinner table, while Rachel calls 999, the bloody knife still gripped in her hand.

Sylvia Townsend WARNER – Lolly Willowes (1926, 224 pages)



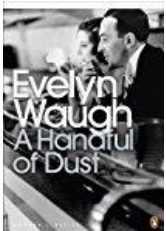
Lolly Willowes, a woman of quiet rebellion and hidden desires, dares to free herself from a suffocating web of familial and societal expectations. As Lolly sheds her dutiful daughter and obedient sister skin, she finds solace and freedom in the quaint village of Great Mop in the Chilterns, with its chalk hills and beech woods. When her newfound contentment is threatened by the arrival of her nephew, she boldly embraces a dark path to secure an audacious and irrevocable freedom.

Tom WATSON – Metronome (2022, 310 pages)



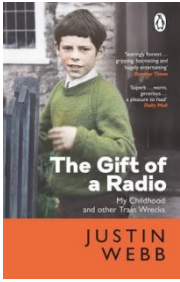
For twelve years Aina and Whitney have been in exile on an island for a crime they committed together. Something is not right. Shipwrecks have begun washing up, and their supply drops have stopped. And on the day they're meant to be collected for parole, the Warden does not come. Instead there's a sheep. But sheep can't swim. As days pass, Aina begins to suspect that their prison is part of a peninsula, and that Whitney has been keeping secrets. **BBC Two Between the Covers Book Club read.**

Evelyn WAUGH **A handful of dust** ([1934] 1997, 255 pages)



After seven years of marriage, the beautiful Lady Brenda Last is bored with life at Hetton Abbey, the Gothic mansion that is the pride and joy of her husband, Tony. She drifts into an affair with the shallow socialite John Beaver and forsakes Tony for the Belgravia set. Brilliantly combining tragedy, comedy and savage irony, *A Handful of Dust* captures the irresponsible mood of the 'crazy and sterile generation' between the wars. The breakdown of the Last marriage is a painful, comic re-working of Waugh's own divorce, and a symbol of the disintegration of society.

Justin WEBB **The gift of a radio** (2022, 256 pages NF)

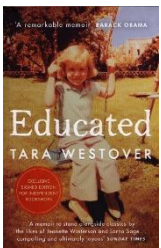


Justin Webb's childhood in the 1970s was far from ordinary. Between his mother's un-diagnosed psychological problems, and his step-father's untreated ones, life at home was dysfunctional at best. But with gun-wielding school masters and sub-standard living conditions, Quaker boarding school wasn't much better. Candid, unsparing, and darkly funny, Justin Webb's memoir is as much a portrait of a troubled era as it is the story of a dysfunctional childhood, shaping the urbane and successful radio presenter we know and love.

H.G. WELLS **The Time Machine** (2012 [1895], 128 pages)

Chilling, prophetic and hugely influential, *The Time Machine* sees a Victorian scientist propel himself into the year 802,701 AD, where he is delighted to find that suffering has been replaced by beauty and contentment in the form of the Eloi, an elfin species descended from man. But he soon realizes that they are simply remnants of a once-great culture - now weak and living in terror of the sinister Morlocks lurking in the deep tunnels, who threaten his very return home. H. G. Wells defined much of modern science fiction with this 1895 tale of time travel, which questions humanity, society, and our place on Earth.

Tara WESTOVER **Educated (Non-Fiction)** (2018, 392 pages)

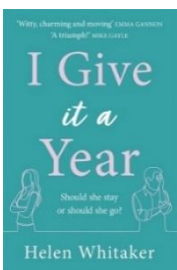


Tara Westover and her family grew up preparing for the End of Days but, according to the government, she didn't exist. She hadn't been registered for a birth certificate. She had no school records because she'd never set foot in a classroom, and no medical records because her father didn't believe in hospitals. As she grew older, her father became more radical and her brother more violent. At sixteen, Tara knew she had to leave home. In doing so she discovered both the transformative power of education, and the price she had to pay for it.

Edith WHARTON **The House of Mirth** (1905, 320 pages)

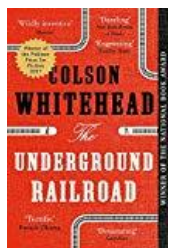
Lily Bart, beautiful, witty and sophisticated, is accepted by 'old money' and courted by the growing tribe of nouveaux riches. But as she nears thirty, her foothold becomes precarious; a poor girl with expensive tastes, she needs a husband to preserve her social standing and to maintain her in the luxury she has come to expect.

Helen WHITAKER **I Give it a Year** (2021, 372 pages)



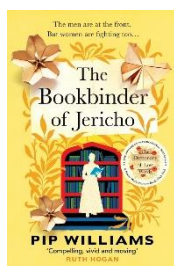
New Year's Eve, and Iris discovers that her husband, Adam, is cheating on her. Furious, she kicks him out, and enlists her Dad to move in and help with the children whilst she tries to mend her broken heart. But her Dad soon starts to display signs of Alzheimer's, and Iris realises that if she loses her partner, she'll be managing an awful lot on her own. Soon, she realises that Adam wasn't the only one taking their marriage for granted, and for the sake of the children she decides to give him one more chance. But is it braver to stay than to run? And can anyone fall in love with the same person twice?

Colson WHITEHEAD The Underground Railroad (2016, 366 pages)



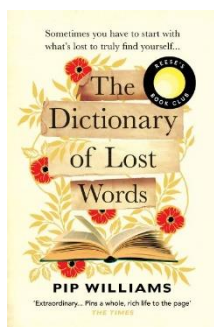
Cora is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. All the slaves lead a hellish existence, but Cora has it worse than most; she is an outcast even among her fellow Africans and she is approaching womanhood, where it is clear even greater pain awaits. When Caesar, a slave recently arrived from Virginia, tells her about the Underground Railroad, they take the perilous decision to escape to the North. *Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction 2017, and Longlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2017.*

Pip WILLIAMS The Bookbinder of Jehrico (2023 436 pages)



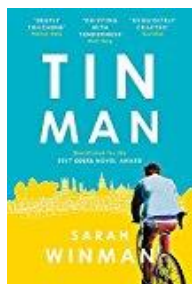
When the men of Oxford University Press leave for the Western Front, Peggy, her twin sister Maude and their friends in the bookbindery must shoulder the burden at home. As Peggy moves between her narrowboat full of memories and the demands of the Press, her dreams of studying feel ever more remote. She must know her place, fold her pages and never stop to savour the precious words in front of her. From volunteer nurses to refugees fleeing the horrors of occupation, the war brings women together from all walks of life, and with them some difficult choices for Peggy. New friends and lovers offer new opportunities, but they also make new demands - and Peggy must write her own story.

Pip WILLIAMS The Dictionary of Lost Words (2020 422p)



In 1901, the word bondmaid was discovered missing from the Oxford English Dictionary. This is the story of the girl who stole it. Esme spends her childhood in the Scriptorium, a garden shed in Oxford where her father and a team of lexicographers are gathering words for the very first Oxford English Dictionary. Esme's place is beneath the sorting table, unseen and unheard. One day, she sees a slip containing the word 'bondmaid' flutter to the floor. Esme realises that some words are considered more important than others, and that words and meanings relating to women's experiences often go unrecorded. She begins to collect words for another dictionary.

Sarah WINMAN Tin man (2017, 197 pages)

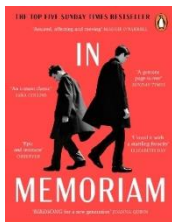


Ellis and Michael are twelve when they first become friends, and for a long time it is just the two of them, cycling the streets of Oxford, teaching themselves how to swim, discovering poetry, and dodging the fists of overbearing fathers. And then one day this closest of friendships grows into something more.

But then we fast forward a decade or so, to find that Ellis is married to Annie, and Michael is nowhere in sight. Which leads to the question, what happened in the years between? This is almost a love story. But it's not as simple as that.

Alice WINN

In Memoriam (2023, 385 pages)

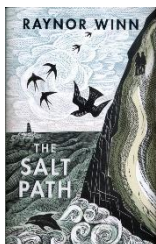


ALICE WINN

It's 1914, and talk of war feels far away to Henry Gaunt, Sidney Ellwood and the rest of their classmates, safely ensconced in their idyllic boarding school in the English countryside. At seventeen, they're too young to enlist, and anyway, Gaunt is fighting his own private battle - an all-consuming infatuation with his best friend, the dreamy, poetic Ellwood - not having a clue that Ellwood is in love with him, always has been. When Gaunt's German mother asks him to enlist as an officer in the British army to protect the family from anti-German attacks, Gaunt signs up immediately, relieved to escape his overwhelming feelings for Ellwood. The front is horrific, of course, and Ellwood soon rushes to join him, spurred on by his love of Greek heroes and romantic poetry. Before long, their classmates have followed suit. **Winner of the British Book Awards 2023**

Raynor WINN

The Salt path (Non-Fiction) (2018, 274 pages)



ALICE WINN

In one devastating week, Raynor and her husband Moth lost their home of 20 years, just as a terminal diagnosis took away their future together. With nowhere else to go, they decided to walk the South West Coast Path: a 630-mile sea-swept trail from Somerset to Dorset, via Devon and Cornwall. This ancient, wind-battered landscape strips them of every comfort they had previously known. With very little money for food or shelter, Raynor and Moth carry everything on their backs and wild camp on beaches and clifftops. But slowly, with every step, every encounter, and every test along the way, the walk sets them on a remarkable journey. They don't know how far they will travel, but - to their surprise - they find themselves on a path to freedom. **Shortlisted for the Costa Biography prize and the Wainwright Prize 2018**

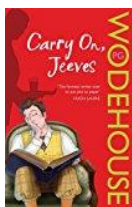
Jeanette WINTERSON **The Gap of time (2015, 304 pages)**



ALICE WINN

A baby girl is abandoned, banished from London to the storm-ravaged American city of New Bohemia. Her father has been driven mad by jealousy, her mother to exile by grief. Seventeen years later, Perdita doesn't know a lot about who she is or where she's come from - but she's about to find out. Jeanette Winterson's cover version of *The Winter's Tale* vibrates with echoes of Shakespeare's original and tells a story of hearts broken and hearts healed, a story of revenge and forgiveness, a story that shows that whatever is lost shall be found.

P.G. WODEHOUSE **Carry on, Jeeves ([1925] 2008, 288 pages)**

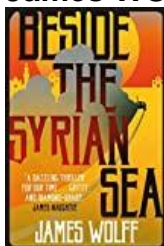


ALICE WINN

From the moment Jeeves glides into Bertie Wooster's life and provides him with a magical hangover cure, Bertie wonders how he ever managed without him. Jeeves makes himself totally indispensable, getting Bertie out of all sorts of scrapes. Originally published in 1925.

James WOLFF

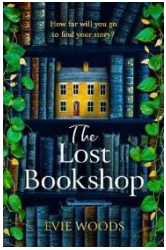
Beside the Syrian sea (2017, 320 pages)



ALICE WINN

Jonas is a British spy. When his father is kidnapped and held for ransom by ISIS in Syria, he takes matters into his own hands. To pay the kidnappers, he begins to steal the only currency he has access to: secret government intelligence. British and American secret service agents in Beirut try everything in their power to stop Jonas, and he finds himself tested to the limit. Racing towards a thrilling confrontation in the Syrian desert, Jonas will have to decide how far he is willing to go to see his father again.

Evie WOODS The Lost Bookshop (2023, 431 pages)



For too long, Opaline, Martha and Henry have been the side characters in their own lives. But when a vanishing bookshop casts its spell, these three unsuspecting strangers will discover that their own stories are every bit as extraordinary as the ones found in the pages of their beloved books. And by unlocking the secrets of the shelves, they find themselves transported to a world of wonder... where nothing is as it seems.

Virginia WOOLF Mrs Dalloway (1925, 217 pages)

On a June morning in 1923, Clarissa Dalloway is preparing for a party and remembering her past. Elsewhere in London, Septimus Smith is suffering from shell-shock and on the brink of madness. Their days interweave and their lives converge as the party reaches its glittering climax. Here, Virginia Woolf perfected the interior monologue and the novel's lyricism and accessibility have made it one of her most popular works.

Anne YOUNGSON Meet me at the museum (2018, 228 pages)



When Tina Hopgood writes a letter of regret to a man she has never met, she doesn't expect a reply. When Anders Larsen, a lonely museum curator answers it, neither does he. They're both searching for something - they just don't know it yet. Anders has lost his wife, along with his hopes and dreams for the future. Tina is trapped in a marriage she doesn't remember choosing. Slowly their correspondence blossoms as they bare their souls to each other with stories of joy, anguish and discovery. But then Tina's letters suddenly cease, and Anders

is thrown into despair. Can their unexpected friendship survive? *Shortlisted for the Costa First Novel Award 2018*

Malala YOUSUFZAI I am Malala (Non-Fiction) (2014, 320 pages)

In 2009 Malala Yousafzai began writing a blog on BBC Urdu about life in the Swat Valley as the Taliban gained control, at times banning girls from attending school. When her identity was discovered, Malala began to appear in both Pakistani and international media, advocating the freedom to pursue education for all. In October 2012, gunmen boarded Malala's school bus and shot her in the face, a bullet passing through her head and into her shoulder. Remarkably, Malala survived the shooting. This is her story.

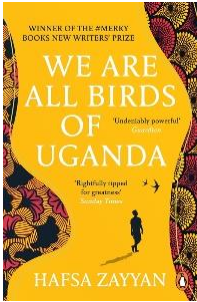
Lea, YPI Free: Coming of Age at the end of history (2021, 313 pages NF)



Lea Ypi grew up in one of the most isolated countries on earth. Albania, the last Stalinist outpost in Europe, was a place of queuing and scarcity, of political executions and secret police. People were equal, neighbours helped each other, and children were expected to build a better world. Then, in December 1990, a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, everything changed. Almost overnight, people could vote freely, wear what they liked and worship as they wished. But factories shut, jobs disappeared and thousands fled to Italy on crowded ships, only to be sent back. Predatory pyramid schemes eventually bankrupted the country, leading to violent conflict. As her own family's secrets

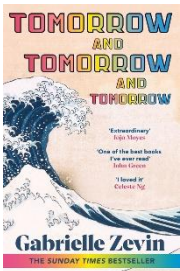
were revealed, Lea found herself questioning what freedom really meant. **Shortlisted for both the Costa and Baillie Gifford prizes for Non Fiction**

Hafsar ZAYYAN We are all Birds of Uganda (2021, 370p)



1960s UGANDA. Hasan is struggling to run his family business following the sudden death of his wife. Just as he begins to see a way forward, a new regime seizes power, and a wave of rising prejudice threatens to sweep away everything he has built. Present-day London. Sameer, a young high-flying lawyer, is called back to his family home by an unexpected tragedy. Moving between two continents and several generations over a troubled century, 'We Are All Birds of Uganda' is a multi-layered, moving, and immensely resonant novel of love, loss, and what it means to find home.

Gabrielle ZEVIN – Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow (2022, 482 pages)



Two kids meet in a hospital gaming room in 1987. One is visiting her sister, the other is recovering from a car crash. The days and months are long there. Their love of video games becomes a shared world - of joy, escape and fierce competition. But all too soon that time is over, fades from view. When the pair spot each other eight years later in a crowded train station, they are catapulted back to that moment. The spark is immediate, and together they get to work on what they love - making games to delight, challenge and immerse players, finding an intimacy in digital worlds that eludes them in their real lives.

Emile ZOLA Therese Raquin (1967, 208 pages)

Therese Raquin is bored by her loveless marriage to her sickly cousin, and allows herself to be swept away by lust and excitement when she meets his earthy and sensual friend Laurent. But the animal passion between them will result in a terrible crime - one that will haunt them for ever. (*translated from French*)