

Shropshire Libraries Reading Group List of Titles – December 2025

New additions to the list are marked as **NEW TITLE**

Chinua Achebe

Arrow of God (Classic). 231 pages.

Ezeulu, headstrong chief priest of the god Ulu, is worshipped by the six villages of Umuaro. But he is beginning to find his authority increasingly under threat - from his rivals in the tribe, from those in the white government and even from his own family. Yet he still feels he must be untouchable - surely he is an arrow in the bow of his God? Armed with this belief, he is prepared to lead his people, even if it means destruction and annihilation. Yet the people will not be so easily dominated.

Akala

Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire (Non-fiction). 342 pages.

From the first time he was stopped and searched as a child, to the day he realised his mum was white, to his first encounters with racist teachers - race and class have shaped Akala's life and outlook. In this book he takes his own experiences and widens them out to look at the social, historical, and political factors that have left us where we are today. Covering everything from the police, education, and identity to politics, sexual objectification and the far right, 'Natives' will speak directly to British denial and squeamishness when it comes to confronting issues of race and class that are at the heart of the legacy of Britain's racialised empire.

Rumaan Alam

Leave the World Behind (Thriller). 256 pages.

Amanda and Clay head to a remote corner of Long Island expecting a holiday: a quiet reprieve from life in New York City, quality time with their teenage son and daughter and a taste of the good life in the luxurious home they've rented for the week. But with a late-night knock on the door, the spell is broken. Ruth and G. H., an older couple who claim to own the home, have arrived there in a panic. These strangers say that a sudden power outage has swept the city, and - with nowhere else to turn - they have come to the country in search of shelter. But with the TV and internet down, and no phone service, the facts are unknowable. Should Amanda and Clay trust this couple - and vice versa? What has happened back in New York? Is the holiday home, isolated from civilisation, a truly safe place for their families? And are they safe from one another?

Naomi Alderman

The Power (Science fiction). 339 pages.

All over the world women are discovering they have the power. With a flick of the fingers they can inflict terrible pain - even death. Suddenly, every man on the planet finds they've lost control. Exploring the concepts of gender, hierarchy and power, *The Power* is an ingenious and masterfully crafted piece of feminist science fiction as well as a searing indictment of our contemporary world.

Waheed Arian

In the Wars (Non-fiction). 320 pages.

Born in war-torn Afghanistan, Waheed Arian's first memories are of bombs. His first-hand experience of the power of medicine inspired him to dedicate his life to healing others. But how does a boy with nothing hope to become a doctor? Fleeing the conflict with his family, he spent much of his childhood in refugee camps in Pakistan, living sometimes ten to a room without basic sanitation or access to education. Waheed largely taught himself, from textbooks bought from street-sellers, and learned English from the BBC World Service. Smuggled to the UK at fifteen with just a hundred dollars in his pocket, he found a job in a shop. He was advised to set his sights on becoming a taxi driver. But the boy from Kabul had bigger ambitions.

Margaret Atwood

The Handmaid's Tale (Literary). 326 pages.

Offred is a Handmaid in The Republic of Gilead, a religious totalitarian state in what was formerly known as the United States. She is placed in the household of The Commander, Fred Waterford - her assigned name, Offred, means 'of Fred'. She has only one function: to breed. If Offred refuses to enter into sexual servitude to repopulate a devastated world, she will be hanged. Yet even a repressive state cannot eradicate hope and desire. As she recalls her pre-revolution life in flashbacks, Offred must navigate through the terrifying landscape of torture and persecution in the present day, and between two men upon which her future hangs.

Jane Austen

Pride and Prejudice (Classic). 367 pages.

Pride and Prejudice, which opens with one of the most famous sentences in English Literature, is an ironic novel of manners. In it the garrulous and empty-headed Mrs Bennet has only one aim - that of finding a good match for each of her five daughters. In this she is mocked by her cynical and indolent husband.

With its wit, its social precision and, above all, its irresistible heroine, *Pride and Prejudice* has proved one of the most enduringly popular novels in the English language.

Bolu Babalola

Love in Colour (Short stories). 304 pages.

Bolu Babalola takes the most beautiful love stories from history and mythology and rewrites them with incredible new detail and vivacity in her debut collection. Focusing on the magical folktales of West Africa, Babalola also reimagines iconic Greek myths, ancient legends from the Middle East, and stories from countries that no longer exist in our world. A celebration of romance in all of its forms.

Sebastian Barry

Days Without End (Literary). 301 pages.

After signing up for the US army in the 1850's, aged barely seventeen, Thomas McNulty and his brother-in-arms, John Cole, fight the Indian Wars and the Civil War. Having both fled terrible hardships, their days are now vivid and filled with wonder, despite the horrors they see and are complicit in. Then, when a young Indian girl crosses their path, the possibility of lasting happiness seems within reach if only they can survive.

Sara Baume

Spill, Simmer, Falter, Wither (Literary). 288 pages.

A misfit man finds a misfit dog. Both are accustomed to being alone, unloved, outcast - but they quickly find in each other a strange companionship of sorts. As spring turns to summer, their relationship grows and intensifies, until a savage act forces them to abandon the precarious life they'd established, and take to the road. Shortlisted for the Costa First Novel Award.

Chloe Benjamin

The Immortalists (Literary). 448 pages.

It's 1969, and holed up in a grimy tenement building in New York's Lower East Side is a travelling psychic who claims to be able to tell anyone the date they will die. The four Gold children, too young for what they're about to hear, sneak out to learn their fortunes. Such prophecies could be dismissed as trickery and nonsense, yet the Golds bury theirs deep. Over the years that follow they attempt to ignore, embrace, cheat and defy the 'knowledge' given to them that day but it will shape the course of their lives forever.

Brit Bennett

The Vanishing Half (Literary). 384 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. What will happen to the next generation, when their own daughters' story lines intersect?

Jonathan Bennett

Around the Coast in Eighty Waves (Non-fiction). 302 pages.

Living in an old, unheated T25 campervan for fourteen months, including the coldest winter for thirty years, Jonathan Bennett travelled clockwise round Britain, surfing every beach he could catch a wave. He shared the waves with seals, sewage and fellow surfers, meeting friendly and not-so-friendly locals, often alone and miles from civilisation. A warm and honest account of the cold, wet challenges of the surfer's path, eloquently capturing the highs and lows, the pain and ultimately the rewards of the journey.

Juliet Blaxland

The Easternmost House (Non-fiction). 244 pages.

Within the next few months, Juliet Blaxland's home will be demolished, and the land where it now stands will crumble into the North Sea. In her numbered days living in the Easternmost House, Juliet fights to maintain the rural ways she grew up with, re-connecting with the beauty, usefulness and erratic terror of the natural world.

Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz

The Passenger (Historical). 266 pages.

Berlin, November 1938. With storm troopers battering against his door, Otto Silbermann must flee out the back of his own home. He emerges onto streets thrumming with violence: it is Kristallnacht, and synagogues are being burnt, Jews rounded up and their businesses destroyed. Turned away from establishments he had long patronised, betrayed by friends and colleagues, Otto finds his life as a respected businessman has dissolved overnight. Desperately trying to conceal his Jewish identity, he takes train after train across Germany in a race to escape this homeland that is no longer home. Twenty-three-year-old Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz wrote *The Passenger* at breakneck speed in 1938, fresh in the wake of the Kristallnacht pogroms, and his prose flies at the same pace.

William Boyd

Gabriel's Moon (Thriller). 272 pages.

Gabriel Dax is a young man haunted by the memories of a tragedy: every night, when sleep finally comes, he dreams about his childhood home in flames. His days are spent on the move as an acclaimed travel writer, capturing changing landscapes in the grip of the Cold War. When he's offered the chance to interview a political figure, his ambition leads him unwittingly into the shadows of espionage.

As Gabriel's reluctant initiation takes hold, he is drawn deeper into duplicity. Falling under the spell of Faith Green, an enigmatic and ruthless MI6 handler, he becomes 'her spy', unable to resist her demands. But amid the peril, paranoia and passion consuming Gabriel's new covert life, it will be the revelations closer to home that change the rest of his story.

Emily Brontë

Wuthering Heights (Classic). 337 pages

Emily Brontë's novel of impossible desires, violence and transgression is a masterpiece of intense, unsettling power. It begins in a snowstorm, when Lockwood, the new tenant of Thrushcross Grange on the bleak Yorkshire moors, is forced to seek shelter at Wuthering Heights. There he discovers the history of the tempestuous events that took place years before: the intense passion between the foundling Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw, her betrayal of him and the bitter vengeance he now wreaks on the innocent heirs of the past.

Sarah Butler **NEW TITLE**

Jack & Bet (Literary). 258 pages.

Jack and Bet have been married for seventy years. Happily so, for the most part. Now, all they want is to enjoy the time they have left together in their small flat. But their son Tommy has other ideas: he thinks they should move out and opt for round-the-clock care in a very different kind of home.

When a young Romanian woman, Marinela, enters their lives, Bet thinks she might have found a solution to all of their problems; one that could change Marinela's life for the better. But doing so would mean confronting a long-buried secret Bet has kept hidden from everyone, even Jack, for decades.

An irresistibly moving story about love and loss, Sarah Butler's *Jack & Bet* is at once a story of unlikely friendship and a tender look at a lifelong struggle to find a place to call home.

Garrett Carr **NEW TITLE**

The Boy from the Sea (Literary). 240 pages.

In 1973 on the west coast of Ireland, a baby is found abandoned on the beach. Who is he? Where is he from?

Ambrose, a local fisherman, is far more interested in who he will become and – with a curious community looking on – takes the baby home and adopts him. But for Declan, the baby's new brother, this arrival is surely bad news. Rivalries can be decades in the making . . .

Set over twenty years, *The Boy from the Sea* is about a restless boy trying to find his place, in a town caught in the storm of a rapidly changing world.

Rory Carroll **NEW TITLE**

Killing Thatcher (Non-fiction). 397 pages.

The gripping account of how the IRA came astonishingly close to killing Margaret Thatcher and to wiping out the British Cabinet – an extraordinary assassination attempt linked to the Northern Ireland Troubles and the most daring conspiracy against the Crown since the Gunpowder Plot.

In this fascinating and compelling book, veteran journalist Rory Carroll retraces the road to the infamous Brighton bombing in 1984 – an incident that shaped the political landscape in the UK for decades to come. He begins with the infamous execution of Lord Mountbatten in 1979 – for which the IRA took full responsibility – before tracing the rise of Margaret Thatcher, her response to the ‘Troubles’ in Ireland and the chain of events that culminated in the hunger strikes of 1981 and the death of 10 republican prisoners, including Bobby Sands. From that moment on Thatcher became an enemy of the IRA – and the organisation swore revenge.

Brian Carter

A Black Fox Running (Literary). 400 pages.

This is the story of Wulfgar, the dark-furred fox of Dartmoor, and of his nemesis, Scoble the trapper, in the seasons leading up to the pitiless winter of 1947. As breathtaking in its descriptions of the natural world as it is perceptive in its portrayal of damaged humanity, it is both a portrait of place and a gripping story of survival.

Candice Carty-Williams

Queenie (Literary). 400 pages.

Queenie is a twenty-five-year-old Black woman living in south London, straddling Jamaican and British culture whilst slotting neatly into neither. She works at a national newspaper where she's constantly forced to compare herself to her white, middle-class peers, and beg to write about Black Lives Matter. After a messy break up from her long-term white boyfriend, Queenie finds herself seeking comfort in all the wrong places.

Clare Chambers **NEW TITLE**

Shy Creatures (Literary). 385 pages.

Croydon, 1964. Art therapist Helen Hansford is working in a psychiatric hospital, where she has been having a passionate but precarious affair with her married colleague, the charismatic Dr Gil Rudden.

Helen's structured life is upended when William Tapping - a silent, thirty-seven-year-old man with a beard down to his waist - arrives at the hospital. As Helen helps William express himself through art, she becomes increasingly entangled in his mysterious past.

Inspired by a true story, *Shy Creatures* is a life-affirming exploration of loneliness, love and the quiet forces that shape our lives, reminding us that freedom can come in unexpected forms.

Clare Chambers

Small Pleasures (Literary). 350 pages.

1957, the suburbs of south east London. Jean Swinney is a journalist on a local paper, trapped in a life of duty and disappointment from which there is no likelihood of escape. When a young 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. As the investigation turns her quiet life inside out, Jean is suddenly given an unexpected chance at friendship, love and - possibly - happiness. Longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction 2021.

Katherine J. Chen **NEW TITLE**

Joan (Historical). 350 pages.

France is mired in a losing war against England. Its people are starving. Its king is in hiding. Yet out of the chaos, an unlikely heroine emerges.

Reckless, steel-willed and brilliant, Joan has survived a childhood steeped in both joy and violence to claim an extraordinary - and fragile - position at the head of the French army. The battlefield and the royal court are full of dangers and Joan finds herself under suspicion from all sides - as well as under threat from her own ambition.

With unforgettably vivid characters and propulsive storytelling, *Joan* is a thrilling epic, a triumph of historical fiction, and a feminist celebration of one remarkable - and remarkably real - woman who left an indelible mark on history.

Tracy Chevalier **NEW TITLE**

The Glassmaker (Historical). 383 pages.

Venice, 1486. Across the lagoon lies Murano. Time flows differently here - like the glass the island's maestros spend their lives learning to handle.

Women are not meant to work with glass, but Orsola Rosso flouts convention to save her family from ruin. She works in secret, knowing her creations must be perfect to be accepted by men. But perfection may take a lifetime.

Skipping like a stone through the centuries, we follow Orsola as she hones her craft through war and plague, tragedy and triumph, love and loss.

The beads she creates will adorn the necks of empresses and courtesans from Paris to Vienna - but will she ever earn the respect of those closest to her?

Yangsze Choo

Night Tiger (Literary). 473 pages.

The Night Tiger explores the rich world of servants and masters, ancient superstition and modern ambition, sibling rivalry and unexpected love. Woven through with Chinese folklore and a tantalizing mystery.

Susanna Clarke

Piranesi (Fantasy). 273 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: the labyrinth of halls, the thousands upon thousands of statues, the tides that thunder up staircases, the clouds that move in slow procession through the upper halls. On Tuesdays and Fridays Piranesi sees his friend, the Other. At other times he brings tributes of food 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? Are they a friend or do they bring destruction and madness as the Other claims? Lost texts must be found; secrets must be uncovered. The world that Piranesi thought he knew is becoming strange and dangerous. Winner of the Women's Prize for Fiction 2021.

Rory Clements

A Prince and a Spy (Thriller). 469 pages.

Sweden, 1942 - Two old friends meet. They are cousins. One is Prince George, Duke of Kent, brother of the King of England. The other is Prince Philipp von Hessen, a committed Nazi and close friend of Adolf Hitler. Days later, Prince George is killed in a plane crash in the north of Scotland. The official story is that it was an accident - but not everyone is convinced. There is even a suggestion that the Duke's plane was sabotaged, but with no evidence, Cambridge spy Tom Wilde is sent north to discover the truth.

J. M. Coetzee

Disgrace (Literary). 220 pages.

After years teaching Romantic poetry at the Technical University of Cape Town, David Lurie, middle-aged and twice divorced, has an impulsive affair with a student. The affair sours; he is denounced and summoned before a committee of inquiry. Willing to admit his guilt, but refusing to yield to pressure to repent publicly, he resigns and retreats to his daughter Lucy's isolated smallholding. For a time, his daughter's influence and the natural rhythms of the farm promise to harmonise his discordant life. But the balance of power in the country is shifting. He and Lucy become victims of a savage and disturbing attack which brings into relief all the faultlines in their relationship. A Big Jubilee Read pick.

Richard Coles

The Madness of Grief (Non-fiction). 177 pages.

Whether it is pastoral care for the bereaved, discussions about the afterlife, or being called out to perform the last rites, death is part of the Reverend Richard Coles's life and work. But when his partner the Reverend David Coles died, shortly before Christmas in 2019, much about death took Coles by surprise. For one thing, David's death at the early age of forty-three was unexpected.

The man that so often assists others to examine life's moral questions now found himself in need of help. He began to look to others for guidance to steer him through his grief. The flock was leading the shepherd. The Reverend Richard Coles's deeply personal account of life after grief.

Matt Coyne

Frank & Red (Literary). 432 pages.

Frank is a grumpy old curmudgeon. A recluse whose only company is the 'ghost' of his dead wife, Marcie. He is estranged from his friends, his son, and the ever-changing world beyond his front gate. And then Red moves in next door. Red is six. A boy struggling to adjust to the separation of his mum and dad, a new school, and the demonic school bully. Red is curious, smart, he never stops talking, and he's got a trampoline. From the moment Red's blonde mop appears over the top of the fence that divides their two gardens, the unlikeliest of friendships is born. A friendship that will change both of their lives forever.

Kelly Critcher

A Matter of Life and Death: Courage, compassion and the fight against coronavirus - a palliative care nurse's story (Non-fiction). 320 pages.

As a palliative care nurse, it is Kelly Critcher's job to look death in the eye - to save a patient while the fight can still be won, and confront life's end with grace and kindness when it can't. In early 2020, everything changed for nurses on the NHS front line. Working on Covid wards and the High Dependency Unit, Kelly spent the height of the coronavirus crisis at Northwick Park hospital - perhaps the UK hospital most deeply ravaged by the illness. She, and many others like her, battled tirelessly in a critical care unit pushed to breaking point, delivering the bad news and fighting the good fight, day-in, day-out, throughout the gravest test our health service has faced since its inception.

Charles Cumming

The Man Between (Thriller). 417 pages.

Successful novelist Kit Carradine has grown restless. So when British Intelligence invites him to enter the secret world of espionage, he willingly takes a leap into the unknown.

Kit finds himself in Morocco on the trail of Lara Bartok – a leading figure in Resurrection, a revolutionary movement whose brutal attacks on right-wing politicians have spread violence throughout the West.

Drawn to Lara, but caught between competing intelligence services who want her dead, Kit faces an awful choice: abandon her to her fate or risk everything trying to save her.

Abi Daré

The Girl with the Louding Voice (Literary). 289 pages.

I don't just want to be having any kind voice. I want a louding voice....At fourteen, Adunni dreams of getting an education and giving her family a more comfortable home in her small Nigerian village. Instead, Adunni's father sells her off to become the third wife of an old man. When tragedy strikes in her new home, Adunni flees to the wealthy enclaves of Lagos, where she becomes a house-girl to the cruel Big Madam, and prey to Big Madam's husband. But despite her situation continuously going from bad to worse, Adunni refuses to let herself be silenced. And one day, someone hears her.

Kit de Waal **NEW TITLE**

Without Warning and Only Sometimes (Non-fiction). 290 pages.

Kit de Waal grew up in a household of opposites and extremes. Her haphazard mother rarely cooked, forbade Christmas and birthdays, worked as a cleaner, nurse and childminder sometimes all at once and believed the world would end in 1975. Meanwhile, her father stuffed barrels full of goodies for his relatives in the Caribbean, cooked elaborate meals on a whim and splurged money they didn't have on cars, suits and shoes fit for a prince. Both of her parents were waiting for paradise. It never came.

Caught between three worlds, Irish, Caribbean and British in 1960s Birmingham, Kit and her brothers and sisters knew all the words to the best songs, caught sticklebacks in jam jars and braved hunger and hellfire until they could all escape.

This is a story of an extraordinary childhood and how a girl who grew up in house where the Bible was the only book on offer went on to discover a love of reading that inspires her to this day.

Grace Dent

Hungry (Non-Fiction). 292 pages.

Hungry traces Grace Dent's story from growing up eating beige food to becoming one of Britain's best-loved food writers. It's also everyone's story – from cheese and pineapple hedgehogs and treats with your nan, to the exquisite joy of a chip butty covered in vinegar and too much salt in the school canteen on a grey day. And the Cadbury's Fruit & Nut from a hospital vending machine that tells a loved one you really care.

Grace's snapshot of how we have lived, laughed and eaten over the past 40 years reveals the central role food plays in either bringing us together or driving us apart – from toasting a large glass of warm Merlot to grimly polishing off a wilted salad.

Charles Dickens **NEW TITLE**

A Tale fo Two Cities (Classic). 442 pages.

Dickens's gripping novel depicts the lives of two very different men, Charles Darnay, an exiled French aristocrat, and Sydney Carton, a disreputable but brilliant English lawyer, as they become enmeshed through their love for Lucie Manette, the daughter of a political prisoner. From the tranquil roads of London, they are drawn against their will to the vengeful, bloodstained streets of Paris at the height of the Reign of Terror, and they soon fall under the lethal shadow of La Guillotine.

Sharon Duggal

Should We Fall Behind (Literary). 277 pages

Jimmy Noone escapes his difficult life in a small town and finds himself living on the streets of a big city where he meets Betwa, who brings with her a chance of real friendship and a glimpse of new hope. Betwa disappears and Jimmy walks across the sprawling metropolis searching for her.

Should We Fall Behind is about the passing of time, and the intricate weaves of joy and suffering, love and loss which shape human life along the way. It is about the people who have somehow become invisible, and how their stories make them visible once more.

Sarah Duguid

Look at Me (Literary). 259 pages.

Lizzy's mother died two years ago, leaving a family bereft by her absence and a house still filled with her things. Then, one day, Lizzy finds a letter from a stranger to her father, and discovers he has another child. Lizzy invites her into their world in an act of outraged defiance. Almost immediately, she realises her mistake.

Lucy Easthope

When the Dust Settles: Searching for Hope after Disaster (Non-Fiction). 304 pages.

When a plane crashes, a bomb explodes, a city floods or a pandemic begins, Lucy Easthope's phone starts to ring...

Lucy is a world-leading authority on recovering from disaster. She holds governments to account, supports survivors and helps communities to rebuild. She has been at the centre of the most seismic events of the last few decades, advising on everything from the 2004 tsunami and the 7/7 bombings to the Grenfell fire and the war in Ukraine. Lucy's job is to pick up the pieces and get us ready for what comes next.

Lucy takes us behind the police tape to scenes of chaos, and into government briefing rooms where confusion can reign. She also looks back at the many losses and loves of her life and career, and tells us how we can all build back after disaster.

Reni Eddo-Lodge

Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race (Non-Fiction). 288 pages.

The book that sparked a national conversation. Exploring everything from eradicated black history to the inextricable link between class and race, *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* is the essential handbook for anyone who wants to understand race relations in Britain today.

Emily Edwards

The Herd (Literary). 341 pages.

Elizabeth and Bryony are polar opposites but their unexpected friendship has always worked. They're the best of friends, and godmothers to each other's daughters - because they both trust that the safety of their children is their top priority.

Little do they know that they differ radically over one very important issue. And when Bryony, afraid of being judged, tells what is supposed to be a harmless white lie before a child's birthday party, the consequences are more catastrophic than either of them could ever have imagined.

Tan Twan Eng

The House of Doors (Historical). 320 pages.

Willie Somerset Maugham is one of the greatest writers of the early twentieth century. But in 1921 he is beleaguered by an unhappy marriage, ill-health and business interests that have gone badly awry. He is also struggling to write. His friend Robert Hamlyn offers an escape in the Straits Settlements of Penang, where Robert's steely wife Lesley learns to see Willie as he is – a man who has no choice but to mask his true self.

As Willie prepares to leave, Lesley confides in him secrets of her own, including how she came to know the charismatic revolutionary Dr Sun Yat Sen. And more scandalous still, her connection to an Englishwoman charged with murder in the Kuala Lumpur courts – a tragedy drawn from fact, and worthy of fiction.

Lousie Erdrich

The Sentence (Literary). 386 pages.

A small independent bookstore in Minneapolis is haunted from November 2019 to November 2020 by the store's most annoying customer. Flora dies on All Souls' Day, but she simply won't leave the store. Tookie, who has landed a job selling books after years of incarceration that she survived by reading 'with murderous attention,' must solve the mystery of this haunting while at the same time trying to understand all that occurs in Minneapolis during a year of grief, astonishment, isolation and furious reckoning.

Bernardine Evaristo

Girl, Woman, Other (Literary). 464 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. Winner of the Booker Prize 2019.

Percival Everett

James (Historical). 320 pages.

The Mississippi River, 1861. When the enslaved Jim overhears that he is about to be sold to a new owner in New Orleans and separated from his wife and daughter forever, he flees to nearby Jackson's Island until he can formulate a plan. Meanwhile, Huck Finn has faked his own death to escape his violent father who recently returned to town. So begins a dangerous and transcendent journey along the Mississippi River, towards the elusive promise of the free states and beyond. As James and Huck navigate the treacherous waters, each bend in the river holds the promise of both salvation and demise. And together, the unlikely pair embark on the most life-changing odyssey of them all. Winner of the 2025 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

Sebastian Faulks

The Seventh Son (Literary). 356 pages.

Tech billionaire Lukas Parn has an ambitious plan. Behind the doors of the IVF clinic in his London institute, a daring switch is made. Young academic Talissa Adam believes she is simply carrying a child for a grateful family, but the baby inside her is different from any living human. The boy, Seth, grows up unaware, though his parents know that he's different: he can't make plans, is unaware of danger and seems to have at least one extra sense. But as Seth becomes a man, the truth about him is revealed and the world starts to hunt him down.

Elena Ferrante

The Days of Abandonment (Literary). 192 pages.

A woman, abandoned by her husband with two young children to care for, finds herself literally trapped within the four walls of their high-rise apartment and is forced to confront her ghosts, the potential loss of her own identity and the possibility that life may never return to normal. From the author of the very popular Neapolitan novels.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Great Gatsby (Classic). 177 pages.

A masterpiece, a dazzling social satire, and a milestone in twentieth century literature, *The Great Gatsby* peels away the layers of the glamorous twenties in the U.S. to display the coldness and cruelty at its heart.

C.A. Fletcher

A Boy and his Dog at the End of the World (Science Fiction). 365 pages.

My name's Griz. I've never been to school, I've never had friends, in my whole life I've not met enough people to play a game of football. My parents told me how crowded the world used to be, before all the people went away, but we were never lonely on our remote island. We had each other, and our dogs. Then the thief came. And he took everything...

Susan Fletcher

The Night in Question (Crime). 448 pages.

Florence Butterfield has lived an extraordinary life full of travel, passion and adventure. But, at eighty-seven, she suspects there are no more surprises to come her way. Then, one midsummer's night, something terrible happens - so strange and unexpected that Florence - or Florrie, as her friends call her - is suspicious. The only clue is a magenta envelope, discarded earlier that day. And Florrie - cheerfully independent but often overlooked - is the only person determined to uncover the truth. As she does, Florrie finds herself looking back on her own life and a long-buried secret becomes ever harder to ignore.

Tom Fort

Rivets, Trivets and Galvanised Buckets: Life in the village hardware shop (Non-Fiction). 352 pages.

In 2018 Tom Fort's daughter-in-law took over a century-old hardware shop. The family dreamed of developing the shop into one that would become the centre of village life; that much did come true, but not in the way they had expected.

Interweaving the evolution of the shop, its previous owners, the customers it serves and the items it sells, *Rivets, Trivets & Galvanised Buckets* offers a delightful study of community and shines a light on the eccentricities of ordinary people. Alongside, it presents a fascinating history of technological development; from who thought of screwdrivers to where the spirit level came from, who devised the process of galvanisation and what genius worked out that a suction pad on the end of a piece of wood could unblock sinks.

Essie Fox

The Last Days of Leda Grey (Historical). 273 pages.

When journalist Ed Peters unearths a dusty old photograph of the silent film actress Leda Grey, he is instantly enchanted by her alluring beauty. He discovers she is still living, in a decaying cliff-top house. And there, after a fifty-year silence, she's finally ready to share her haunting story. She tells of a volatile love affair, of obsession and jealousy, and the darkly glamorous world of early cinema. She tells of a world of secrets and lies, and of a past more sinister than any of the silent films that Leda Grey once starred in.

Dawn French

Because of You (Literary). 432 pages.

In the same hospital, two very different women give birth to two very similar daughters. Hope leaves with a beautiful baby girl. Anna leaves with empty arms. Seventeen years later, the gods who keep watch over broken-hearted mothers wreak mighty revenge, and the truth starts rolling, terrible and deep, toward them all. The power of mother-love will be tested to its limits. Perhaps beyond . . .

Claire Fuller

Unsettled Ground (Thriller). 287 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 (and sometimes kill) 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. Winner of the Costa Novel Award 2021.

Patrick Gale

Take Nothing With You (Literary). 352 pages.

1970s Weston-Super-Mare and ten-year-old oddball Eustace, an only child, has life transformed by his mother's quixotic decision to sign him up for cello lessons. Music-making brings release for a boy who is discovering he is an emotional volcano. He laps up lessons from his young teacher, not noticing how her brand of glamour is casting a damaging spell over his frustrated and controlling mother. When he is enrolled in holiday courses in the Scottish borders, lessons in love, rejection and humility are added to daily practice.

Damon Galgut

The Promise (Historical). 293 pages.

On a farm outside Pretoria, the Swarts are gathering for Ma's funeral. The younger generation, Anton and Amor, detest everything the family stand for - not least their treatment of the black woman who has worked for them her whole life. Salome was to be given her own house, her own land...yet somehow, that vow is carefully ignored. As each decade passes, and the family assemble again, one question hovers over them. Can you ever escape the repercussions of a broken promise? Winner of the Booker Prize 2021.

Bonnie Garmus

Lessons in Chemistry (Literary). 386 pages.

Chemist Elizabeth Zott is not your average woman. In fact, she would be the first to point out that there is no such thing. But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute take a very unscientific view of equality.

Forced to leave her job at the institute, she soon finds herself the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show, *Supper at Six*.

But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because as it turns out, Elizabeth Zott isn't just teaching women to cook. She's daring them to change the status quo. One molecule at a time.

Charlie Garratt **NEW TITLE**

The Thief-Taker's Apprentice (Historical crime). 290 pages.

Shropshire, England, 1749.

Sarah Beaumont's settled life is under threat. Her home is burgled and buried secrets threaten to resurface. She hires Edwin Hare, a thief-taker, to recover what's been stolen, but won't reveal its nature. They find themselves drawn to each other, despite the risk this poses.

Meg Valentine, an under-gardener employed by Sarah's husband, dreams of escaping poverty. When Edwin offers her the chance to assist him, Meg eagerly accepts, hoping to learn the trade of thief-taking. But the case takes a dark turn when their thief is found murdered—and both Sarah and Edwin's actions draw suspicion.

As Meg helps uncover a trail of blackmail and hidden motives, she questions the trustworthiness of those around her, including her mentor.

Determined to find the truth, Meg must navigate tangled relationships, dangerous secrets, and her own ambitions, to uncover the killer and secure her future.

Annie Garthwaite

Cecily (Historical). 359 pages.

1431 is a dangerous time for a woman to be defiant.

England has been fighting France for 100 years. At home, power-hungry men within a corrupt government manipulate a weak king - and name Cecily's husband, York's loyal duke, an enemy. As the king's grasp on sanity weakens, plots to destroy York take root...

It will take all of Cecily's courage and cunning to save her family. But when the will to survive becomes ambition for a crown, will she risk treason to secure it?

Atul Gawande

Being Mortal (Non-fiction). 282 pages.

Atul Gawande examines his experiences as a surgeon, as he confronts the realities of ageing and dying in his patients and in his family, as well as the limits of what he can do. He emerges with a story that crosses the globe and history, exploring questions that range from the curious to the profound.

Rosy Gee **NEW TITLE**

The Mysterious Disappearance of Marsha Boden (Crime). 273 pages.

In the quiet village of Little Twichen, nestled in the Shropshire countryside, life moves at a gentle pace, until the day Marsha Boden vanishes without a trace. Her husband returns from a fishing trip to an empty house... and waits two full days before reporting her missing.

As whispers ripple through the village, secrets start to surface. Marsha had been poking around a controversial new housing development and had stumbled upon something disturbing in a nearby Ludlow warehouse. Did she discover something alarming? And if so, who wanted her silenced?

When two more villagers die under suspicious circumstances, including the local GP, tension tightens like a noose. With no sign of Marsha's body and a growing list of suspects, her close friends take matters into their own hands.

Ruth Gilligan

Nine Folds Make a Paper Swan (Literary). 329 pages.

At the start of the twentieth century, a young girl and her family emigrate from the continent in search of a better life in America, only to pitch up in Ireland by mistake. In 1958, a mute boy locked away in a mental institution outside of Dublin forms an unlikely friendship with a man consumed by the story of the love he lost nearly two decades earlier. And in present-day London, an Irish journalist is forced to confront her conflicting notions of identity and family when her Jewish boyfriend asks her to make a true leap of faith. Spanning generations and braiding together three unforgettable voices, *Nine Folds Make a Paper Swan* shows us what it means to belong, and how storytelling can redeem us all.

Jennie Godfrey

The List of Suspicious Things (Crime). 461 pages.

Yorkshire, 1979 - Maggie Thatcher is prime minister, drainpipe jeans are in, and Miv is convinced that her dad wants to move their family down south because of the murders.

Leaving Yorkshire and her best friend Sharon simply isn't an option, no matter the dangers lurking round their way; or the strangeness at home that started the day Miv's mum stopped talking. Perhaps if she could solve the case of the disappearing women, they could stay after all?

So, Miv and Sharon decide to make a list: a list of all the suspicious people and things down their street. People they know. People they don't. But their search for the truth reveals more secrets in their neighbourhood, within their families - and between each other - than they ever thought possible. What if the real mystery Miv needs to solve is the one that lies much closer to home?

Peter Godfrey-Smith

Other Minds: The Octopus and the Evolution of Intelligent Life (Non-fiction). 276 pages.

How did the octopus, a solitary creature with little social life, become so smart? What is it like to have eight tentacles that are so packed with neurons that they virtually 'think for themselves'? By tracing the question of inner life back to its roots and comparing human beings with our most remarkable animal relatives, Godfrey-Smith casts crucial new light on the octopus mind – and on our own.

William Golding

Lord of the Flies (Classic). 225 pages.

A plane crashes on a desert island. The only survivors are a group of schoolboys. By day, they discover fantastic wildlife and dazzling beaches, learning to survive; at night, they are haunted by nightmares of a primitive beast.

Orphaned by society, it isn't long before their innocent childhood games devolve into a savage, murderous hunt...

Jessie Greengrass

Sight (Literary). 208 pages.

In Jessie Greengrass' superb debut novel, our unnamed narrator recounts her progress to motherhood, while remembering the death of her own mother ten years before, and the childhood summers she spent with her psychoanalyst grandmother.

Andrew Sean Greer

Less (Literary). 261 pages.

Arthur Less is a failed novelist about to turn fifty. A wedding invitation arrives in the post: it is from an ex-boyfriend of nine years who is engaged to someone else. Arthur can't say yes - it would be too awkward; he can't say no - it would look like defeat. So, he begins to accept the invitations on his desk to half-baked literary events around the world. From France to India, Germany to Japan, Arthur almost falls in love, almost falls to his death, and puts miles between him and the plight he refuses to face. *Less* is a novel about mishaps, misunderstandings and the depths of the human heart. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction 2018.

Kate Grenville

Secret River (Historical). 349 pages.

London, 1806. William Thornhill, happily wedded to his childhood sweetheart Sal, is a waterman on the River Thames. Life is tough but bearable until William makes a mistake, a bad mistake for which he and his family are made to pay dearly.

His sentence: to be transported to New South Wales for the term of his natural life. Soon Thornhill, a man no better or worse than most, has to make the most difficult decision of his life.

Lauren Groff

Matrix (Historical). 260 pages.

Born from a long line of female warriors and crusaders, yet too coarse, too wild, too rough-hewn for courtly life, Marie de France is cast from the royal court. Woefully, she is sent to the muddy fields of Angleterre to take up her new duty as the prioress of an impoverished abbey.

The abbey is a dreadful place: its inhabitants are on the brink of starvation, beset by disease, stoic and stern, yet plagued with an unholy tendency to gossip. Marie cannot help but pine for the decadence and comfort of France; her secret lover Cecily, her queen Eleanor, and the very court that had spited her.

Yet Marie soon realises that, though she may be tied to a life of duty, she wields more power than she could have imagined. With the fearlessness that has always set her apart, she inspires her new sisterhood to awaken their spirits and finally claim what is theirs.

Abdulrazak Gurnah

By the Sea (Literary). 256 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.

Matt Haig

Midnight Library (Literary). 304 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.

Janice Hallett **NEW TITLE**

The Appeal (Crime). 447 pages.

There is a mystery to solve in the sleepy town of Lower Lockwood. It starts with the arrival of two secretive newcomers, and ends with a tragic death. Roderick Tanner QC has assigned law students Charlotte and Femi to the case. Someone has already been sent to prison for murder, but he suspects that they are innocent. And that far darker secrets have yet to be revealed...

Throughout the amateur dramatics society's disastrous staging of *All My Sons* and the shady charity appeal for a little girl's medical treatment, the murderer hid in plain sight. The evidence is all there, waiting to be found. But will Charlotte and Femi solve the case? A fiendishly clever whodunit, presented as a series of documents – emails, messages and transcripts – that hold the keys to the mystery.

Mohsin Hamid

Exit West (Literary). 228 pages.

In a city swollen by refugees but still mostly at peace, or at least not yet openly at war, Saeed and Nadia share a cup of coffee, and their story begins. It will be a love story but also a story about war and a world in crisis, about how we live now and how we might live tomorrow. Before too long, the time will come for Nadia and Saeed to leave their homeland. When the streets are no longer useable and all options are exhausted, this young couple will join the great outpouring of those fleeing a collapsing city.

Mohammed Hanif

Red Birds (Literary). 283 pages.

American pilot Major Ellie has crashed his plane in the middle of a desert. Lucky for him there's room for him at the very refugee camp he was supposed to bomb. Teenage Momo doesn't see it that way: the camp is a trap, not a refuge. His brother's missing, his parents are in a rage, and an aid worker won't stop trying to interview him for her book on the Teenage Muslim Mind.

Savage, irreverent and deliciously dark, *Red Birds* is a masterful unravelling of intertwined fates in a forgotten war-scape - and a brilliant satire about the absurdity of war and the impossibility of peace.

Kristin Hannah **NEW TITLE**

The Women (Literary). 464 pages.

'Women can be heroes, too'.

When twenty-year-old nursing student, Frances "Frankie" McGrath, hears these unexpected words, it is a revelation. Raised on California's idyllic Coronado Island and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has always prided herself on doing the right thing, being a good girl. But in 1965 the world is changing, and she suddenly imagines a different path for her life. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she impulsively joins the Army Nurses Corps and follows his path.

As green and inexperienced as the young men sent to Vietnam to fight, Frankie is overwhelmed by the chaos and destruction of war, as well as the unexpected trauma of coming home to a changed America. But Frankie will also discover the true value of female friendship and the heartbreak that love can cause.

Georgina Harding

Land of the Living (Historical). 240 pages.

Charlie's experiences at the Battle of Kohima and the months he spent lost in the remote jungles of Nagaland during the Second World War are now history. Home and settled on a farm in Norfolk and newly married to Claire, he is one of the lucky survivors. Starting a family and working the land seem the best things a man can be doing.

But a chasm exists between them. Memories flood Charlie's mind; at night, on rain-slicked roads and misty mornings in the fields, the past can feel more real than the present. Though hidden even to himself, the darkest secrets of Charlie's adventures in the strange and shadowy ridges of the Nagaland mountains, his dream-like encounters with the mysterious and ancient tribesmen, leak and bleed through his consciousness. What should be said and what left unsaid? Is it possible to forge a new life in the wake of unfathomable horror?

Thomas Hardy **NEW TITLE**

Far From the Madding Crowd (Classic). 448 pages.

This is the story of Bathsheba Everdene, who inherits her uncle's farm, then surprises the villagers of Weatherbury by deciding to run it herself rather than hire a manager. Three men vie for the affections of this independent young woman: the gentleman-farmer Boldwood, the soldier-seducer Sergeant Troy and the devoted shepherd Gabriel Oak. Each, in contrasting ways, unsettles her decisions and complicates her life, and when tragedy ensues, the stability of the whole community is threatened.

Elodie Harper **NEW TITLE**

Wolf Den (Historical). 455 pages.

Amara was once a beloved daughter, until her father's death plunged her family into penury. Now she is a slave in Pompeii's infamous brothel, owned by a man she despises. Sharp, clever and resourceful, Amara is forced to hide her talents. For as a she-wolf, her only value lies in the desire she can stir in others. But Amara's spirit is far from broken. By day, she walks the streets with her fellow she-wolves, finding comfort in the laughter and dreams they share. For the streets of Pompeii are alive with opportunity. Out here, even the lowest slave can secure a reversal in fortune. Amara has learnt that everything in this city has its price. But how much is her freedom going to cost her?

Robert Harris

Conclave (Thriller). 382 pages.

Behind the locked doors of the Sistine Chapel, 118 cardinals are meeting in conclave to cast their votes in the world's most secretive election.

They are holy men. But they are ambitious. And they have rivals. Over the next 72 hours, one of them will become the most powerful spiritual figure on earth. Who will it be? Now an Oscar and Bafta winning film.

Shelley Harris

Jubilee (Literary). 325 pages.

The year of the Jubilee. Amid the street party food, bunting, pop music and platform shoes tensions erupt in Cherry Gardens. Years later Satish must confront the truth about that day and the events that changed the course of his life.

Samantha Harvey **NEW TITLE**

Orbital (Science fiction) 136 pages

A team of astronauts in the International Space Station collect meteorological data, conduct scientific experiments and test the limits of the human body. But mostly they observe. Together they watch their silent blue planet, circling it sixteen times, spinning past continents and cycling through seasons, taking in glaciers and deserts, the peaks of mountains and the swells of oceans. Endless shows of spectacular beauty witnessed in a single day.

Yet although separated from the world they cannot escape its constant pull. News reaches them of the death of a mother, and with it comes thoughts of returning home. They look on as a typhoon gathers over an island and people they love, in awe of its magnificence and fearful of its destruction.

The fragility of human life fills their conversations, their fears, their dreams. So far from earth, they have never felt more part - or protective - of it. They begin to ask, what is life without earth? What is earth without humanity? Winner of the 2024 Booker Prize.

Natalie Haynes

Stone Blind (Fantasy). 384 pages.

Medusa is the sole mortal in a family of gods. Growing up with her Gorgon sisters, she begins to realize that she is the only one who experiences change, the only one who can be hurt. When Poseidon commits an unforgiveable act against Medusa in the temple of Athene, the goddess takes her revenge where she can: on his victim. Medusa is changed forever – writhing snakes for hair and her gaze now turns any living creature to stone. She can look at nothing without destroying it. Desperate to protect her beloved sisters, Medusa condemns herself to a life of shadows. Until Perseus embarks upon a quest to fetch the head of a Gorgon . . .

Emma Hooper

Etta and Otto and Russell and James (Literary). 278 pages.

Etta's greatest unfulfilled wish is to see the sea and so, at the age of eighty-two, she gets up very early one morning, takes a rifle, some chocolate, and her best boots, and begins walking the 2,000 miles to water.

Emily Howes

The Painter's Daughters (Historical) 372 pages

1759, Ipswich. Sisters Peggy and Molly Gainsborough are the best of friends and do everything together. They spy on their father as he paints, they rankle their mother as she manages the books, they tear barefoot through the muddy fields that surround their home. But there is another reason they are inseparable: from a young age, Molly has had a tendency to forget who she is, to fall into confusion, and Peggy knows instinctively that no one must find out.

When the family move to Bath, Thomas Gainsborough finds fame as a portrait artist, while his daughters are thrown into the whirl of polite society. Here, the merits of marriage and codes of behaviour are crystal clear, and secrets much harder to keep. As Peggy goes to greater lengths to protect her sister, she finds herself falling in love, and their precarious situation is soon thrown catastrophically off-course. The discovery of a betrayal forces her to question all she has done for Molly and whether any one person can truly change the fate of another.

Tammye Huf **NEW TITLE**

A More Perfect Union (Historical). 355 pages.

Henry O'Toole sails to America to escape poverty and famine in Ireland, only to find anti-Irish prejudice awaiting him. Determined never to starve again, he changes his surname to Taylor and heads south to Virginia, where he can pick up work as a travelling blacksmith on the prosperous plantations.

Maple is a slave on Jubilee Plantation. Given to her half-sister as a wedding present by their father, she longs to return to her daughter and husband. When sassy house slave Sarah arrives, she sees her chance at last to be reunited with her own family.

Sarah has her own troubles. She has to learn to navigate the hierarchy of her fellow slaves as well as the power system of her new white masters, and now the mysterious blacksmith is promising her the world, and her freedom too.

Angela Hui

Takeaway (Non-Fiction). 352 pages.

Growing up in a Chinese takeaway in rural Wales, Angela Hui was made aware at a very young age of just how different she and her family were seen by her local community. From attacks on the shopfront (in other words, their home), to verbal abuse from customers, and confrontations that ended with her dad wielding the meat cleaver; life growing up in a takeaway was far from peaceful.

But alongside the strife, there was also beauty and joy in the rhythm of life in the takeaway and in being surrounded by the food of her home culture. Family dinners before service, research trips to Hong Kong, preparing for the weekend rush with her brothers - the takeaway is a hive of activity before a customer even places their order. A brilliantly warm and immersive memoir from someone on the other side of the counter.

Aldous Huxley

Brave New World (Classic). 288 pages.

Welcome to New London. Everybody is happy here. Our perfect society achieved peace and stability through the prohibition of monogamy, privacy, money, family and history itself. Now everyone belongs.

You can be happy too. All you need to do is take your Soma pills.

Discover the brave new world of Aldous Huxley's classic novel, written in 1932, which prophesied a society which expects maximum pleasure and accepts complete surveillance - no matter what the cost.

Liz Hyder

The Gifts (Historical). 476 pages.

October 1840. A young woman staggers alone through a forest in Shropshire as a huge pair of impossible wings rip themselves from her shoulders.

Meanwhile, when rumours of a 'fallen angel' cause a frenzy across London, a surgeon desperate for fame and fortune finds himself in the grips of a dangerous obsession, one that will place the women he seeks in the most terrible danger.

Celia Imrie

Orphans of the Storm (Historical). 408 pages.

Nice, France, 1911: After three years of marriage, young seamstress Marcela Caretto has finally had enough. Her husband, Michael, an ambitious tailor, has become cruel and controlling and she determines to get a divorce. But while awaiting the judges' decision on the custody of their two small boys, Michael receives news that changes everything.

Meanwhile fun-loving New York socialite Margaret Hays is touring Europe with some friends. Restless, she resolves to head home aboard the most celebrated steamer in the world – RMS Titanic.

As the ship sets sail for America, carrying two infants bearing false names, the paths of Marcela, Michael and Margaret cross - and nothing will ever be the same again.

Kate Innes

The Errant Hours (Historical). 387 pages.

Welsh Marches, July 1284—the uprising in Wales is over, the leader gruesomely executed, the dead are buried. But for Illesa Arrowsmith, the war's aftermath is just as brutal. When her brother is thrown into the Forester's prison on false charges, she is left impoverished and alone. All Illesa has left is the secret manuscript entrusted to her—a book so powerful it can save lives, a book so valuable that its discovery could lead to her death. From an obscure Forester's prison in a Shropshire valley, to Stokesay, Clun and Criccieth Castles, and from the humble village church of Eaton-under-Heywood to Wenlock Priory, the reader follows Illesa on her perilous course to the western reaches of medieval Britain, and the holy shrine of Bardsey Island.

Kazuo Ishiguro

The Remains of the Day (Literary). 272 pages.

During the summer of 1956, Stevens, the aging butler of Darlington Hall embarks on a leisurely motoring holiday that will take him deep into the heart of the English countryside and thence into his past.

Jo Jackson

Beyond the Margin (Literary). 235 pages.

Is living on the edge of society a choice? Or is a choice a luxury of the fortunate? Joe, fighting drug addiction, runs until the sea halts his progress. Nuala, abandoned at five years old, for her survival means learning not to care. The intertwining of these lives makes a compelling story of dark and light, trauma, loss and second chances.

Jo Jackson

They Speak of Night (Literary). 268 pages.

Asadi fled India days before the Independence he fought for.

Lily, a student, had life to look forward to - until one weekend changed everything.

More than half a century separates the events that shape their lives.

How can an old man and a young woman help each other?

When Lily finds the courage to undertake what is asked of her, it has consequences neither of them could envisage.

This story crosses decades and continents, cultures and beliefs.

A thoughtful, uplifting novel by local author, Jo Jackson.

Shirley Jackson

Dark Tales (Short Stories). 195 pages.

An ordinary commute turns into a nightmarish game of hide and seek, a loving wife hides homicidal thoughts and a concerned citizen might just be an infamous serial killer, in this collection of Shirley Jackson's deliciously dark tales. Here nothing is as it seems and nowhere is safe, from the city streets to the country manor, and from the small-town apartment to the dark, dark woods..

Jill Johnson

Devil's Breath (Thriller). 304 pages.

Eustacia Rose is a Professor of Botanical Toxicology who lives alone in London with only her extensive collection of poisonous plants for company. She tends to her garden with meticulous care. Her life is quiet. Her schedule never changes. Until the day she hears a scream and the temptation to investigate proves irresistible.

Through her telescope, Professor Rose is drawn into the life of an extraordinarily beautiful neighbour, Simone, and nicknames the men who visit her after poisonous plants according to the toxic effect they have on Simone. But who are these four men? And why does Eustacia Rose recognise one of them?

Just as she preserves her secret garden, she feels inexplicably compelled to protect her neighbour, but Eustacia soon finds herself entangled in a far more complicated web than she could ever have imagined. When her precious garden is vandalised and someone close to Simone is murdered with a toxin derived from a rare poisonous plant, Eustacia becomes implicated in the crime.

Douglas Johnstone

The Space Between Us (Science Fiction). 300 pages.

When three people suffer strokes after seeing dazzling lights over Edinburgh, then awake completely recovered, they're convinced their ordeal is connected to the alien creature discovered on a nearby beach. An adrenaline-soaked, deeply humane, life-affirming first-contact novel.

Andy Jones

Four (Literary). 276 pages.

In the time they've known each other, Sally, Al and Mike have shared - well, almost everything. Sally and Al have been married for seven years, though now their relationship is hanging by a thread. Sally and Mike have been best friends since university. And on many occasions something more. Mike and Al have been friends and colleagues for many years. Yet with Al poised to become Mike's boss, their friendship comes under threat. And now there's Mike and Faye. They haven't been together long, but Mike's pretty sure that, this time, it's the real deal. As the three old friends sit on a train heading towards Brighton to meet Faye, little do they know that after this weekend, the four of them will have shared everything. They all know they have made a mistake. But they could never have imagined the consequences.

James Joyce

Dubliners (Short stories). 368 pages.

Written before 1905 and nearly ten years in publication, this vibrant and graphic collection of stories depicting everyday life in Dublin represents James Joyce's first major work, and is considered by many to be his most accessible writing.

Rachel Joyce

Miss Benson's Beetle (Literary). 407 pages.

It is 1950. In a devastating moment of clarity, Margery Benson abandons her dead-end job and advertises for an assistant to accompany her on an expedition. She is going to travel to the other side of the world to search for a beetle that may or may not exist.

Enid Pretty, in her unlikely pink travel suit, is not the companion Margery had in mind. And yet together they will be drawn into an adventure that will exceed every expectation. They will risk everything, break all the rules, and at the top of a red mountain, discover their best selves.

Emma Kennedy

Letters from Brenda: My Mother's Lifetime of Secrets (Non-Fiction). 320 pages.

After Emma Kennedy's mother Brenda passed away, she found herself floundering, unable to make sense of the mysterious, charismatic but unpredictable woman who had been her mum.

And then she found Brenda's letters, forgotten for years in the attic. As Emma made her way through decades of correspondence, she started to piece together the fractured relationships and buried secrets that had left their indelible mark on Brenda. Finally, she allowed herself to ask the question she couldn't as a child: who, really, was her mother?

Vaseem Khan **NEW TITLE**

Midnight at Malabar House (Crime). 325 pages.

Bombay, New Year's Eve, 1949. As India celebrates the arrival of a momentous new decade, Inspector Persis Wadia stands vigil in the basement of Malabar House, home to the city's most unwanted unit of police officers. Six months after joining the force she remains India's first female police detective, mistrusted, sidelined and now consigned to the midnight shift.

And so, when the phone rings to report the murder of prominent English diplomat Sir James Herriot, the country's most sensational case falls into her lap.

As 1950 dawns and India prepares to become the world's largest republic, Persis, accompanied by Scotland Yard criminalist Archie Blackfinch, finds herself investigating a case that is becoming more political by the second. Navigating a country and society in turmoil, Persis, smart, stubborn and untested in the crucible of male hostility that surrounds her, must find a way to solve the murder - whatever the cost.

Juheia Kim

Beasts of a Little Land (Historical). 403 pages.

It is 1917, and Korea is under Japanese occupation. With the threat of famine looming, ten-year-old Jade is sold by her desperate family to Miss Silver's courtesan school in the bustling city of Pyongyang. As the Japanese army tears through the country, she is forced to flee to the southern city of Seoul. Soon, her path crosses with that of an orphan named JungHo, a chance encounter that will lead to a life-changing friendship.

But when JungHo is pulled into the revolutionary fight for independence, Jade must decide between following her own ambitions and risking everything for the one she loves.

Sweeping through five decades of Korean history, Juheia Kim's sparkling debut is an intricately woven tale of love stretched to breaking point, and two people who refuse to let go.

Barbara Kingsolver

Demon Copperhead (Literary). 548 pages.

'First I got myself born.'

And so begins the tale of Demon Copperhead: a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father's good looks and copper-colored hair, bucket-loads of charm and a talent or two the world is yet to discover. We befriend Demon on this, his journey through the modern perils of foster care, child labour, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, the dizzying highs of true love, and the crushing losses that can accompany it. A reimagining of Dickens' David Copperfield for the modern age and winner of the Women's Prize and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction 2023.

Giles Kristian

Where Blood Runs Cold (Thriller). 323 pages.

Erik Amdahl and his spirited daughter, Sofia, have embarked on a long-promised cross-country ski trip deep into Norway's arctic circle. For Erik, it's the chance to bond properly with his remaining daughter following a tragic accident. For Sofia, it's the proof she needs that her father does care.

Then, far from home in this snowbound wilderness, with night falling and the mercury plummeting, an accident sends them in search of help - and shelter. Nearby is the home of a couple - members of Norway's indigenous Sami people - who they've met before, and who welcome them in. Erik is relieved. He believes the worst is over. He thinks that Sofia is now safe. He could not be more wrong.

Because he and Sofia are not the old couple's only visitors that night - and soon he and his daughter will be running for their lives...

Rebecca F. Kuang

Yellowface (Thriller). 336 pages.

When failed writer June Hayward witnesses her rival Athena Liu die in a freak accident, she sees her opportunity... and takes it.

So what if it means stealing Athena's final manuscript?

So what if it means 'borrowing' her identity?

And so what if the first lie is only the beginning...

Finally, June has the fame she always deserved. But someone is about to expose her...

What happens next is entirely everyone else's fault.

Olivia Laing

The Lonely City (Non-fiction). 315 pages.

What does it mean to be lonely? How do we live, if we're not intimately engaged with another human being? How do we connect with other people? When Olivia Laing moved to New York City in her mid-thirties, she found herself inhabiting loneliness on a daily basis. Fascinated by the experience, she began to explore the lonely city by way of art.

Moving fluidly between works and lives, Laing conducts an electric, dazzling investigation into what it means to be alone, illuminating not only the causes of loneliness but also how it might be redeemed and embraced.

Nikita Lalwani

You People (Literary). 232 pages.

The Pizzeria Vesuvio looks like any other Italian restaurant in London - with a few small differences. The chefs who make the pizza fiorentinas are Sri Lankan, and half the kitchen staff are illegal immigrants.

At the centre is Tuli, the restaurant's charismatic proprietor and resident Robin Hood, who promises to help anyone in need. Welsh nineteen-year-old Nia, haunted by her troubled past, is running from her family. Shan, having fled the Sri Lankan civil war, is desperate to find his.

But when Tuli's guidance leads them all into dangerous territory, and the extent of his mysterious operation unravels, each is faced with an impossible moral choice. In a world where the law is against you, how far would you be willing to lie for a chance to live?

Christina Lamb **NEW TITLE**

The Prince Rupert Hotel for the Homeless (Non-fiction). 310 pages.

When Covid-19 hit the UK and lockdown was declared, Mike Matthews wondered how his four-star hotel would survive. Then the council called. The British government had launched a programme called 'Everyone In' and 33 rough sleepers – many of whom had spent decades on the street – needed beds. The Prince Rupert Hotel in Shrewsbury would go on to welcome well over 100 people from this community, offering them shelter, good food and a comfy bed during the pandemic.

This is the story of how that luxury hotel spent months locked down with their new guests, many of them traumatised, addicts or suffering from mental illness. As a world-leading foreign correspondent turning her attention to her own country for the first time, Christina Lamb chronicles how extreme situations were handled and how shocking losses were suffered, how romances emerged between guests and how people grappled with their pasts together.

Unexpected and profound, heart-warming and heartbreaking, this is a tale that gives a panoramic insight into modern Britain in all its failures, and people in all their capacities for kindness – even in the most difficult of times.

John Lanchester

The Wall (Literary). 276 pages.

Kavanagh begins his time patrolling the Wall.

If he's lucky, if nothing goes wrong, he only has to do two years of this. 729 more nights.

The best thing that can happen is that he survives and gets off the Wall and will never have to spend another day of his life anywhere near it.

But what if something did happen - if the Others came, if he had to fight for his life?

Thrilling and heartbreaking, The Wall is about a troubled world you will recognise as your own - and about what might be found when all is lost.

Lee Lawrence

The Louder I Will Sing (Non-Fiction). 272 pages.

On 28th September 1985, Lee Lawrence's mother Cherry Groce was wrongly shot by police during a raid on her Brixton home. The bullet shattered her spine and she never walked again. In the chaos that followed, 11-year-old Lee watched in horror as the News falsely pronounced his mother dead. In Brixton, already a powder keg because of the deep racism that the community was experiencing, it was the spark needed to trigger two days of rioting that saw buildings brought down by petrol bombs, cars torched and shops looted. But for Lee, it was a spark that lit a flame that would burn for the next 30 years as he fought to get the police to recognise their wrongdoing. His life had changed forever: he was now his mother's carer, he had seen first-hand the prejudice that existed in his country, and he was at the mercy of a society that was working against him. And yet that flame - for justice, for peace, for change - kept him going.

Mary Lawson

Town Called Solace (Literary). 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. It seems he's suspected of a crime.

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 and in particular for one small child. She desperately wants to make amends before she dies.

Set in Northern Ontario in 1972, *A Town Called Solace* explores the relationships of these three people brought together by fate and the mistakes of the past.

Erin Litteken

The Memory Keeper of Kyiv (Historical). 338 pages.

In the 1930s, Stalin's activists marched through the Soviet Union, espousing the greatness of collective farming. It was the first step in creating a man-made famine that, in Ukraine, stole almost 4 million lives. Inspired by the history the world forgot, and the Russian government denies, Erin Litteken reimagines their story.

Sean Lusk

The Second Sight of Zachary Cloudesley (Historical). 368 pages.

Leadenhall Street, London, 1754.

Raised amongst the cogs and springs of his father's workshop, Zachary Cloudesley has grown up surrounded by strange and enchanting clockwork automata. He is a happy child, beloved by his father Abel and the workmen who help bring his father's creations to life.

He is also the bearer of an extraordinary gift; at the touch of a hand, Zachary can see into the hearts and minds of the people he meets.

But then a near-fatal accident will take Zachary away from the workshop and his family. His father will have to make a journey that he will never return from. And, years later, only Zachary can find out what happened.

Bernard MacLaverly

Midwinter Break (Literary). 208 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.

S. G. MacLean

Bookseller of Inverness (Historical). 397 pages.

After Culloden, Iain MacGillivray was left for dead on Drum Mossie Moor.

Wounded, his face brutally slashed, he survived only by pretending to be dead as the Redcoats patrolled the corpses of his Jacobite comrades.

Six years later, with the clan chiefs routed and the Highlands subsumed into the British state, Iain lives a quiet life, working as a bookseller in Inverness.

One day, after helping several of his regular customers, he notices a stranger lurking in the upper gallery of his shop, poring over his collection. But the man refuses to say what he's searching for and only leaves when Iain closes for the night.

The next morning Iain opens up shop and finds the stranger dead, his throat cut, and the murder weapon laid out in front of him - a sword with a white cockade on its hilt, the emblem of the Jacobites. With no sign of the killer, Iain wonders whether the stranger discovered what he was looking for - and whether he paid for it with his life. He soon finds himself embroiled in a web of deceit and a series of old scores to be settled in the ashes of war.

Hilary Mantel

Mantel Pieces (Non-Fiction). 327 pages.

In 1987, when Hilary Mantel was first published in the London Review of Books, she wrote to the editor, Karl Miller, 'I have no critical training whatsoever, so I am forced to be more brisk and breezy than scholarly.' This collection of twenty reviews, essays and pieces of memoir from the next three decades, tells the story of what happened next.

Her subjects range far and wide: Robespierre and Danton, the Hite report, Saudi Arabia where she lived for four years in the 1980s, the Bulger case, John Osborne, the Virgin Mary as well as the pop icon Madonna, a brilliant examination of Helen Duncan, Britain's last witch. There are essays about Jane Boleyn, Charles Brandon, Christopher Marlowe and Margaret Pole, which display the astonishing insight into the Tudor mind we are familiar with from the bestselling Wolf Hall Trilogy. Her famous lecture, 'Royal Bodies', which caused a media frenzy, explores the place of royal women in society and our imagination. Here too are some of her LRB diaries, including her first meeting with her stepfather and a confrontation with a circus strongman. Constantly illuminating, always penetrating and often very funny, interleaved with letters and other ephemera gathered from the archive, Mantel Pieces is an irresistible selection from one of our greatest living writers.

Simon Mawer

Ancestry (Historical). 414 pages.

Almost two hundred years ago, Abraham, an illiterate urchin, scavenges on a Suffolk beach and dreams of running away to sea ... Naomi, a seventeen-year-old seamstress, imagines a new life in the big city ... George, a private soldier of the 50th Regiment of Food, marries his Irish bride, Annie, in the cathedral in Manchester and together they face married life under arms. Now these people exist only in the bare bones of registers and census lists but they were once real enough.

Simon Mawer puts flesh on our ancestors' bones to bring them to life and give them voice. There is birth and death; there is love, both open and legal but also hidden and illicit. Yet the thread that connects these disparate figures is something that they cannot have known - the unbreakable bond of family.

William McIlvanney

Laidlaw (Crime). 293 pages.

When a young woman is found brutally murdered in Kelvingrove Park, only one man stands a chance of finding her killer. Jack Laidlaw. He is a man of contrasts, ravaged by inner demons but driven by a deep compassion for the violent criminals in Glasgow's underworld. But will Laidlaw's unorthodox methods get him to the killer in time, when the victim's father is baying for blood?

Thomas McMullan

The Last Good Man (Literary). 307 pages.

Duncan Peck has travelled alone to Dartmoor in search of his cousin. He has come from the city, where the fires are always burning.

In his cousin's village, Peck finds a place with tea rooms and barley fields, a church and a schoolhouse. Out here, the people live an honest life – and if there's any trouble, they have a way to settle it. They sit in the shadow of a vast wall, inscribed with strange messages. Anyone can write on the wall, anonymously, about their neighbours, about any wrongdoing that might hurt the community. Then comes the reckoning.

The stranger from the city causes a stir. He has not been there long before the village wakes up to the most unspeakable accusation; sentences daubed on the wall that will detonate the darkest of secrets.

Peace Adzo Medie

His Only Wife (Literary). 278 pages.

Afi Tekple, a bright young seamstress from a small town in Ghana, is convinced by her family to marry a man she has never met. Elikem Ganyo is a wealthy businessman whose family has chosen Afi in the hope that she will distract him from a relationship with another woman they think is inappropriate. The fact that she doesn't know Elikem seems a small price to pay for a marriage that offers her family financial security and provides the key to a lifestyle she has always wanted. But when Afi arrives in Accra, Ghana's gleaming capital, she realises her fairy-tale ending might not be all she had hoped for...

Tom Michell

Penguin Lessons (Non-fiction). 227 pages.

Juan Salvador the penguin is rescued by Tom Michell from an oil slick in Uruguay. A pet is the last thing he needs but it's the start of a beautiful friendship as the little penguin transforms the lives of all he meets.

Heather Morris

The Tattooist of Auschwitz (Historical). 320 pages.

This novel is based on the true story of Lale and Gita Sokolov, two Slovakian Jews, who survived Auschwitz and eventually made their home in Australia. In that terrible place, Lale was given the job of tattooing the prisoners marked for survival - literally scratching numbers into his fellow victims' arms in indelible ink to create what would become one of the most potent symbols of the Holocaust.

Sarah Moss

Ghost Wall (Literary). 160 pages.

Seventeen-year-old Silvie is on a camp in rural Northumberland with her father and a group of scholars, led by an archaeologist with an interest in Iron Age sacrifice. As Silvie glimpses new freedoms with the students, her relationship with her father deteriorates, until the haunting rites of the past begin to bleed into the present.

Jojo Moyes

The Giver of Stars (Literary). 437 pages.

England, late 1930s, and Alice Wright - restless, stifled - makes an impulsive decision to marry wealthy American Bennett van Cleve and leave her home and family behind. But stuffy, disapproving Baileyville, Kentucky, where her husband favours work over his wife, and is dominated by his overbearing father, is not the adventure - or the escape - that she hoped for. That is, until she meets Margery O'Hare - daughter of a notorious felon and a troublesome woman the town wishes to forget. Margery's on a mission to spread the wonder of books and reading to the poor and lost - and she needs Alice's help. Trekking alone under big open skies, through wild mountain forests, Alice, Margery and their fellow sisters of the trail discover freedom, friendship and a life to call their own.

Sayaka Murata

Convenience Store Woman (Literary). 176 pages.

This Akutagawa-prize winning novel follows the everyday activities of an unconventional woman who finds happiness in convenience store work, despite mounting familial pressure to marry or move along to a different kind of life.

Paul Murray

The Bee Sting (Literary). 643 pages.

The Barnes family are in trouble.

Until recently they ran the biggest business in town, now they're teetering on the brink of bankruptcy – and that's just the start of their problems. Dickie and Imelda's marriage is hanging by a thread; straight-A student Cass is careening off the rails; PJ is hopelessly in debt to the school bully.

Meanwhile the ghosts of old mistakes are rising out of the past to meet them, but everyone's too wrapped up in the present to see the danger looming . . .

Benjamin Myers

The Gallows Pole (Historical). 384 pages.

From his remote moorland home, David Hartley assembles a gang of weavers and land-workers to embark upon a criminal enterprise that will capsize the economy and become the biggest fraud in British history. They are the Cragg Vale Coiners and their business is 'clipping' - the forging of coins, a treasonous offence punishable by death. When an excise officer vows to bring them down and with the industrial age set to change the face of England forever, Hartley's empire begins to crumble. Forensically assembled, The Gallows Pole is a true story of resistance and a rarely told alternative history of the North.

Benjamin Myers

The Offing (Literary). 272 pages.

One summer following the Second World War, Robert Appleyard sets out on foot from his Durham village. Sixteen and the son of a coal miner, he makes his way across the northern countryside until he reaches the former smuggling village of Robin Hood's Bay. There he meets Dulcie, an eccentric, worldly, older woman who lives in a ramshackle cottage facing out to sea. Staying with Dulcie, Robert's life opens into one of rich food, sea-swimming, sunburn and poetry. The two come from different worlds, yet as the summer months pass, they form an unlikely friendship that will profoundly alter their futures.

Tarashea Nesbit

Wives of Los Alamos (Historical). 232 pages.

Contentious, gripping and intimate, *The Wives of Los Alamos* is a personal tale of one of the most momentous events in our history. A fascinating and disturbing insight into the secret life of the Los Alamos families living under the shadow of the creation of the atomic bomb.

Sylvain Neuvel

Sleeping Giants (Science Fiction). 377 pages.

A girl named Rose is riding her new bike near her home in South Dakota, when she falls through the earth. She wakes up at the bottom of a square-shaped hole, its walls glowing with intricate carvings. But the firemen who come to save her peer down upon something even stranger: a little girl in the palm of a giant metal hand. 17 years later, the mystery of the bizarre artifact remains unsolved - the object's origins, architects, and purpose unknown. But some can never stop searching for answers.

Liz Nugent

Strange Sally Diamond (Thriller). 363 pages.

Sally Diamond cannot understand why what she did was so strange. She was only doing what her father told her to do, to put him out with the rubbish when he died.

Now Sally is the centre of attention, not only from the hungry media and police detectives, but also a sinister voice from a past she cannot remember. As she begins to discover the horrors of her childhood, Sally steps into the world for the first time, making new friends and big decisions, and learning that people don't always mean what they say.

But who is the man observing Sally from the other side of the world? And why does her neighbour seem to be obsessed with her? Sally's trust issues are about to be severely challenged . . .

Edna O'Brien

Little Red Chairs (Literary). 299 pages.

When a man who calls himself a faith healer arrives in a small, west-coast Irish village, the community is soon under the spell of this charismatic stranger from the Balkans. One woman in particular, Fidelma McBride, becomes enthralled in a fatal attraction that leads to unimaginable consequences.

Maggie O'Farrell

Hamnet (Historical). 372 pages.

On a summer's day in 1596, a young girl in Stratford-upon-Avon takes to her bed with a sudden 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 Hamnet will not survive the week.

Hamnet is a novel inspired by the son of a famous playwright: a boy whose life has been all but forgotten, but whose name was given to one of the most celebrated plays ever written.

Andrew O'Hagan

Mayflies (Literary). 304 pages.

In the summer of 1986, James and Tully ignite a friendship based on music, films and the rebel spirit. With school over, they rush towards a magical weekend of youthful excess in Manchester played out against the greatest soundtrack ever recorded. And there a vow is made: to go at life differently. Thirty years on, the phone rings. Tully has news.

Michael Ondaatje

The English Patient (Literary). 324 pages.

The final curtain is closing on the Second World War and in an abandoned Italian village, Hana, a nurse, tends to her sole remaining patient. Rescued from a burning plane, the anonymous Englishman is damaged beyond recognition and haunted by painful memories.

The only clue Hana has to unlocking his past is the one thing he clung on to through the fire – a copy of The Histories by Herodotus, covered with handwritten notes detailing a tragic love affair.

Michael Ondaatje

Warlight (Historical). 304 pages.

It is 1945, and London is still reeling from the Blitz. 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 all who seem determined to protect Rachel and Nathaniel. But are they really what and who they claim to be? A dozen years later, Nathaniel journeys through recollection, reality and imagination to uncover all he didn't know or understand in that time, to piece together a story that feels something like the truth.

Mirabel Osler

A Gentle Plea for Chaos (Non-fiction). 181 pages.

Laced with horticultural musings and titbits of garden wisdom, this delightful little book describes the trials and tribulations of designing and creating one of Shropshire's most notable gardens.

Delia Owens **NEW TITLE**

Where the Crawdads Sing (Literary). 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.

Michael Palin

Great-Uncle Harry (Non-fiction). 336 pages.

From the time, many years ago, when Michael Palin first heard that his grandfather had a brother, Harry, he was determined to find out more about him. The quest that followed involved hundreds of hours of painstaking detective work. Michael dug out every bit of family gossip and correspondence he could. He studied every relevant official document. He tracked down what remained of his great-uncle Harry's diaries and letters, and pored over photographs of First World War battle scenes to see whether Harry appeared in any of them. He walked the route Harry took on that fatal, final day of his life amid the mud of northern France. And as he did so, a life that had previously existed in the shadows was revealed to him.

Great-Uncle Harry is an utterly compelling account of an ordinary man who led an extraordinary life. A blend of biography, history, travelogue and personal memoir this is Michael Palin at his very finest.

Orhan Pamuk

The Red-Haired Woman (Literary). 288 pages.

On the outskirts of a town thirty miles from Istanbul, a master well-digger and his young apprentice are hired to find water on a barren plain. As they struggle in the summer heat, excavating metre by metre, the two will develop a father/son bond that neither has known before. But in the nearby town, where they spend their evenings, the boy will find an irresistible diversion. The Red-Haired Woman, an alluring member of a travelling theatre group, catches his eye, and she seems as fascinated by him as he is by her. But in his distraction a horrible accident occurs, and he will spend his life unaware of the outcome, or who the Red-Haired Woman was, until many years later.

Lev Parikian

Into the Tangled Bank (Non-fiction). 298 pages.

It's often said that we're a nation of nature lovers, but what does that really mean?

Lev Parikian sets out to explore the many ways that he, and we, experience the natural world - from pavement to garden and from wildlife reserve to far-flung island.

He visits the haunts of famous nature lovers to examine their insatiable curiosity; meets ramblers, birders and den-builders; and gets up close and personal with the nature he finds everywhere - including the kitchen sink.

David Park **NEW TITLE**

Spies in Canaan (Thriller). 188 pages.

Michael has travelled a long way from his boyhood under the endless skies of the Midwest. His retirement is peaceful, if solitary. But one day there is a visitation: a mysterious car on the seafront, and a package delivered. From its contents, Michael understands that he has been commissioned to undertake a final journey.

As Michael makes his way deep into a distant desert - a strange and liminal landscape that lies between hell and redemption - he undertakes another journey, into long-suppressed memories: of Vietnam and the dying days of war, and to face a final accounting for what was done.

Mike Parker

All the Wide Border (Non-fiction). 304 pages.

All the Wide Border is a personal journey through the places, amongst the people, and across the divides of the border between England and Wales.

Taking in some of our loveliest landscapes, and our darkest secrets, this is a region of immeasurable wonder and interest. It is here that the deepest roots and thorniest paradoxes of Britishness lie. The border between the countries, even as a concept, is ragged, jagged and many-layered.

Simon Parker

Riding Out (Non-fiction). 320 pages.

In March 2020, as Britain entered its first lockdown, Simon Parker's life fell apart; his travel journalism career vanished overnight and shortly afterwards he received the tragic news that a close friend had died. With a long-suppressed anxiety disorder starting to rear its head, he turned to the only therapies he knew and trusted: travel and exercise.

Setting off on his bike from the northernmost point of Shetland with only a sleeping bag and a camping stove, Simon would end up cycling 3,427 miles around Britain. En route, he would meet hundreds of resilient Britons, who were all, in their own way, riding out the storm just like he was. Even in his gloomiest moments he began to see that a chink of light was never too far away.

Ann Patchett

Tom Lake (Literary). 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.

As Lara recalls the past, her daughters examine their own lives and relationship with their mother, and are forced to reconsider the world and everything they thought they knew.

Sarah Pearse

The Sanatorium (Thriller). 427 pages.

A beautiful, eerie hotel in the Swiss Alps, recently converted from an abandoned sanatorium, is the last place Detective Elin Warner wants to be. But her estranged brother has invited her there for his engagement party, and she feels she has no choice but to accept.

Arriving in the midst of a threatening storm, Elin immediately feels on edge. And things only get worse when they wake the next morning to find her brother's fiancée is missing. With access to the hotel cut off, the guests begin to panic.

But this is only the first disappearance. Everyone's in danger - and anyone could be next . . .

Charlotte Philby

Edith and Kim (Historical). 384 pages.

In June 1934, Kim Philby met his Soviet handler, the spy Arnold Deutsch. The woman who introduced them was called Edith Tudor-Hart. She changed the course of 20th century history. Then she was written out of it.

Drawing on the Secret Intelligence Files on Edith Tudor-Hart, along with the private archive letters of Kim Philby, this finely worked, evocative and beautifully tense novel – by the granddaughter of Kim Philby – tells the story of the woman behind the Third Man.

Sylvia Plath

The Bell Jar (Literary). 234 pages.

With hopes of a glamorous job in New York, life seems full of promise to Esther Greenwood, but soon leads her to the brink of suicide. The sharply observed and darkly humorous only novel from the poet renowned for her tragic early death

Richard Powers

Bewilderment (Literary) 326 pages.

Theo Byrne is a promising young scientist who has found a way to search for life on other planets dozens of light years away. He is also the widowed father of a most unusual nine-year-old. His son Robin is funny, loving and filled with plans. He thinks and feels deeply, adores animals and can spend hours painting elaborate pictures. But after a violent outburst from Robin at school, the strength of their close bond will be tested to its limits...

What can a father do, when those around him refuse to understand his rare and troubled child? And how can he reveal to his boy the truth about our beautiful, bewildered world?

Hazel Prior

Away with the Penguins (Literary) 392 pages

Veronica McCreedy lives in a mansion by the sea. She loves a nice cup of Darjeeling tea whilst watching a good wildlife documentary. And she's never seen without her ruby-red lipstick.

Although these days Veronica 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 . . . today Veronica is going to make a decision that will change all of this.

Natasha Pulley **NEW TITLE**

Half Life of Valery K (Historical). 373 pages.

In 1963, in a Siberian gulag, former nuclear specialist Valery Kolkhanov has mastered what it takes to survive: the right connections to the guards for access to food and cigarettes, the right pair of warm boots to avoid frostbite, and the right attitude toward the small pleasures of life. But on one ordinary day, all that changes: Valery's university mentor steps in and sweeps Valery from the frozen prison camp to a mysterious unnamed town hidden within a forest so damaged it looks like the trees have rusted from within.

Here, Valery is Dr. Kolkhanov once more, and he's expected to serve out his prison term studying the effect of radiation on local animals. But as Valery begins his work, he is struck by the questions his research raises: what, exactly, is being hidden from the thousands who live in the town? And if he keeps looking for answers, will he live to serve out his sentence?

Laura Purcell

Silent Companions (Horror). 384 pages.

Newly married, newly widowed Elsie is sent to see out her pregnancy at her late husband's crumbling country estate, The Bridge.

With her new servants resentful and the local villagers actively hostile, Elsie only has her husband's awkward cousin for company. Or so she thinks. For inside her new home lies a locked room, and beyond that door lies a two-hundred-year-old diary and a deeply unsettling painted wooden figure – a Silent Companion – that bears a striking resemblance to Elsie herself...

Joanna Quinn

Whalebone Theatre (Historical) 546 pages

This is the story of an old English manor house by the sea, with crumbling chimneys, draping ivy and a library full of dusty hardbacks. It's the story of the three children who grow up there, and the adventures they create for themselves while the grown-ups entertain endless party guests.

This is the story of a whale that washes up on a beach, whose bones are claimed by a twelve-year-old girl with big ambitions and an even bigger imagination. An unwanted orphan who grows into an unmarriageable young woman, fiercely determined to do things differently.

But as the children grow to adulthood, another story has been unfolding in the wings. And when the war finally takes centre stage, they find themselves cast, unrehearsed, into roles they never expected to play.

Christiane Ritter

A Woman in the Polar Night (Non-fiction) 216 pages

In 1934, the painter Christiane Ritter leaves her comfortable home for a year with her husband on the Arctic island of Spitsbergen. On arrival she is shocked to realise that they are to live in a tiny ramshackle hut on the shores of a lonely fjord, hundreds of miles from the nearest settlement.

At first, Christiane is horrified by the freezing cold, the bleak landscape and the lack of supplies... But after encounters with bears and seals, long treks over the ice and months of perpetual night, she finds herself falling in love with the Arctic's harsh, otherworldly beauty.

This luminous classic memoir tells of her inspiring journey to freedom and fulfilment in the adventure of a lifetime.

Sally Rooney

Normal People (Literary). 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.

Michael Rosen

Many Different Kinds of Love (Non-fiction) 307 pages

Michael Rosen wasn't feeling well. Soon he was struggling to breathe, and then he was admitted to hospital, suffering from coronavirus as the nation teetered on the edge of a global pandemic.

What followed was months on the wards: six weeks in an induced coma, and many more weeks of rehab and recovery as the NHS saved Michael's life, and then got him back on his feet. Throughout Michael's stay in intensive care, a notebook lay at the end of his bed, where the nurses who cared for him wrote letters of hope and support. Embarking on the long road to recovery, Michael was soon ready to start writing about his near-death experience.

Combining stunning new prose poems by one of Britain's best loved poets and the moving coronavirus diaries of his nurses, doctors and wife Emma-Louise Williams, this is a beautiful book about love, life and the NHS.

Diana Rosie

Alberto's Lost Birthday (Historical). 289 pages.

A little boy discovers that his grandfather, Alberto, doesn't have a birthday he is determined to help him find it. As an orphan during the Spanish Civil War, Alberto lost all knowledge of his childhood so the pair set off on a quest journeying back into Alberto's past.

Hannah Rothschild

The Improbability of Love (Literary). 496 pages.

Annie McDee stumbles across a dirty painting in a junk shop. Soon she finds herself drawn unwillingly into the tumultuous London art world, populated by exiled Russian oligarchs, avaricious Sheikhs, desperate auctioneers and unscrupulous dealers, all scheming to get their hands on her painting - a lost eighteenth-century masterpiece called 'The Improbability of Love'. Shortlisted for the Bailey's Women's Prize for Fiction.

Jacqueline Roy

Gosling Girl (Thriller). 393 pages.

Michelle Cameron's name is associated with the most abhorrent of crimes. A child who lured a younger child away from her parents and to her death, she is known as the black girl who murdered a little white girl; evil incarnate according to the media.

As the book opens, she has done her time, and has been released as a young woman with a new identity to start her life again.

When another shocking death occurs, Michelle is the first in the frame. Brought into the police station to answer questions around a suspicious death, it is only a matter of time until the press find out who she is now and where she lives and set about destroying her all over again.

Natalie Tyler is the officer brought in to investigate the murder. A black detective constable, she has been ostracised from her family and often feels she is in the wrong job. But when she meets Michelle, she feels a complicated need to protect her, whatever she might have done.

Marjane Satrapi **NEW TITLE**

Persepolis (Graphic novel). 343 pages.

In powerful black-and-white comic strip images, Satrapi tells the coming-of-age story of her life in Tehran from ages six to fourteen, years that saw the overthrow of the Shah's regime, the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, and the devastating effects of war with Iraq. The intelligent and outspoken only child of committed Marxists and the great-granddaughter of one of Iran's last emperors, Marjane bears witness to a childhood uniquely entwined with the history of her country.

Persepolis paints an unforgettable portrait of daily life in Iran and of the bewildering contradictions between home life and public life. Marjane's child's-eye view of dethroned emperors, state-sanctioned whippings, and heroes of the revolution allows us to learn as she does the history of this fascinating country and of her own extraordinary family. Intensely personal, profoundly political, and wholly original, Persepolis is at once a story of growing up and a reminder of the human cost of war and political repression. It shows how we carry on, with laughter and tears, in the face of absurdity. And, finally, it introduces us to an irresistible little girl with whom we cannot help but fall in love.

Samuel Selvon

Lonely Londoners (Classic). 160 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? Both devastating and funny, 'Lonely Londoners' is an unforgettable account of immigrant experience.

Elif Shafak

The Forty Rules of Love (Literary). 368 pages.

Ella Rubinstein has a husband, three teenage children, and a pleasant home. Everything that should make her confident and fulfilled. Yet there is an emptiness at the heart of Ella's life - an emptiness once filled by love. So when Ella reads a manuscript about the thirteenth-century Sufi poet Rumi and Shams of Tabriz, and his forty rules of life and love, her world is turned upside down. She embarks on a journey to meet the mysterious author of this work. It is a quest infused with Sufi mysticism and verse, taking Ella and us into an exotic world where faith and love are heartbreakingly explored...

Elif Shafak

There are Rivers in the Sky (Literary). 482 pages.

There Are Rivers in the Sky is a rich, sweeping novel set between the 19th century and modern times, about love and loss, memory and erasure, hurt and healing, centred around three enchanting characters living on the banks of the River Thames and the River Tigris - their lives all curiously touched by the epic of Gilgamesh.

Kamila Shamsie

Best of Friends (Literary). 336 pages.

Maryam and Zahra: In 1988 Karachi, two fourteen-year-old girls are a decade into their friendship, sharing in-jokes, secrets and a love for George Michael. As Pakistan's dictatorship falls and a woman comes to power, the world suddenly seems full of possibilities. Elated by the change in the air, they make a snap decision at a party. That night, everything goes wrong, and the two girls are powerless to change the outcome.

Zahra and Maryam: In present-day London, two influential women remain bound together by loyalties, disloyalties, and the memory of that night, which echoes through the present in unexpected ways. Now both have power; and both have very different ideas of how to wield it. Their friendship has always felt unbreakable; can it be undone by one decision?

Mary Shelley **NEW TITLE**

Frankenstein (Classic). 230 pages.

Mary Shelly's classic tale of terror is the story of Victor Frankenstein, a young student, who learns the secret of imparting life into a creature that he has constructed from corpses he finds.

Sara Sheridan

Fair Botanists (Historical). 371 pages.

It's the summer of 1822 and Edinburgh is abuzz with rumours of King George IV's impending visit. In botanical circles, however, a different kind of excitement has gripped the city. In the newly-installed Botanic Garden, the Agave Americana plant looks set to flower - an event that only occurs once every few decades.

When newly widowed Elizabeth arrives in Edinburgh to live with her late husband's aunt Clementina, she's determined to put her unhappy past in London behind her. As she settles into her new home, she becomes fascinated by the beautiful Botanic Garden which borders the grand house and offers her services as an artist to record the rare plant's impending bloom. In this pursuit, she meets Belle Brodie, a vivacious young woman with a passion for botany and the lucrative, dark art of perfume creation.

Belle is determined to keep both her real identity and the reason for her interest in the Garden secret from her new friend. But as Elizabeth and Belle are about to discover, secrets don't last long in this Enlightenment city . . .

Lionel Shriver

Property: A Collection (Short Stories). 336 pages.

This landmark publication, the first collection of stories from a master of the form, explores the idea of "property" in both senses of the word: real estate, and stuff. These sharp, brilliantly imaginative pieces illustrate how our possessions act as proxies for ourselves, and how tussles over ownership articulate the power dynamics of our relationships. In Shriver's world, we may possess people and objects and places, but in turn they possess us.

Bapsi Sidhwa

The Crow Eaters (Literary). 290 pages.

Seeking capitalist ventures and fortune, Faredoon 'Freddy' Junglewalla moves his family - his pregnant wife, children and belligerent mother-in-law - from their ancestral village in rural India to the bustling metropolis of Lahore. Welcomed by the small but tight-knit Parsi community, Freddy establishes a booming business and his family soon become one of the most respected in Lahore. It seems that the only thing holding Freddy back is his sizeable and burdensome mother-in-law. As his family grows, and events - funny, tragic and life-changing - occur, Freddy's reach permeates the wider country and an intricate portrait of colonial India is revealed.

Alan Sillitoe

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (Classic). 219 pages.

This cult classic of working class life in post-war Nottingham follows the exploits of rebellious factory worker Arthur Seaton.

Working all day at a lathe leaves Arthur Seaton with energy to spare in the evenings. A hard-drinking, hard-fighting hooligan, he knows what he wants, and he's sharp enough to get it.

Before long, his carryings-on with a couple of married women become the stuff of local gossip. But then one evening he meets a young girl and life begins to look less simple...

Curtis Sittenfeld

Rodham (Literary). 432 pages.

Smart, diligent, and a bit plain, that's the general consensus. Then Hillary goes to college, and her star rises. At Yale Law School, she continues to be a leader - and catches the eye of driven, handsome and charismatic Bill. But when he asks her to marry him, Hillary gives him a firm No.

How might things have turned out for them, for America, for the world itself, if Hillary Rodham had really turned down Bill Clinton?

Carrie Snyder

Girl Runner (Literary). 363 pages.

Part historical page-turner, part contemporary mystery, an engaging and endearing story about family, ambition, athletics and the dedicated pursuit of one's passions.

Zoe Somerville

The Night of the Flood (Thriller). 352 pages.

An atmospheric literary thriller set during the devastating North Sea flood of 1953, in which a love triangle turns murderous. As summer turns to winter, a devastating storm hits the coast, flooding the land and altering everything in its path. In this new, watery landscape, Verity's tangled web of secrets, lies and passion will bring about a crime that will change all their lives forever.

Kate Spicer

Lost Dog (Non-fiction). 288 pages.

Kate is a middle aged woman trying to steer some order into a life that is going off the rails. When she adopts a lurcher called Wolfy, the shabby rescue dog saves her from herself. But when the dog disappears, it is up to Kate to hit the streets of London and find him. Will she save him, as he has saved her - or will she lose everything?

As she trudges endlessly calling his name in the hopeless hope she may find him, she runs into other people's landscapes and lives, finding allies amongst psychics, bloggers and mysterious midnight joggers. Trying to find her dog tests her relationship, and her sanity, to its limits – and gets her thinking about her life, and why things have turned out as they have for her.

John Steinbeck

Of Mice and Men (Classic). 105 pages.

Drifters in search of work, George and his childlike friend Lennie, have nothing in the world except the clothes on their back - and a dream that one day they will have some land of their own. Eventually they find work on a ranch in California's Salinas Valley, but their hopes are dashed as Lennie - struggling against extreme cruelty, misunderstanding and feelings of jealousy - becomes a victim of his own strength.

Emma Stonex

The Lamplighters (Thriller). 355 pages

Cornwall, 1972. Three keepers vanish from a remote lighthouse, miles from the shore. The entrance door is locked from the inside. The clocks have stopped. The weather log describes a mighty storm, but the skies have been clear all week.

What happened to those three men, out on the tower? The heavy sea whispers their names. The tide shifts beneath the swell, drowning ghosts. Can their secrets ever be recovered from the waves?

Twenty years later, the women they left behind are still struggling to move on. Helen, Jenny and Michelle should have been united by the tragedy, but instead it drove them apart. And then a writer approaches them. He wants to give them a chance to tell their side of the story. But only in confronting their darkest fears can the truth begin to surface . . .

Rebecca Stott

Dark Earth (Historical). 368 pages.

AD 500. An island in the Thames.

Isla has a secret: she has learned her father's sophisticated sword-making skills at a time when even entering a forge is forbidden to women. Her sister, Blue, has a secret, too: at low tide on the night of each new moon, she visits the bones of the mud woman, drowned by the elders of her tribe who wanted to make a lesson of someone who wouldn't hold her tongue.

When the local Seax overlord discovers Isla's secret there is nowhere for the sisters to hide, except across the water to the walled ghost city, Londinium. Here Blue and Isla find sanctuary in an underworld community of squatters, emigrants, travellers and looters, led by the mysterious Crowther, living in an abandoned brothel and bathhouse. But trouble pursues them even into the haunted city.

Elizabeth Strout

Tell Me Everything (Literary). 256 pages.

It's autumn in Maine, and the town lawyer Bob Burgess has become enmeshed in an unfolding murder investigation, defending a lonely, isolated man accused of killing his mother. He has also fallen into a deep and abiding friendship with the acclaimed writer, Lucy Barton, who lives nearby in a house next to the sea. Together, Lucy and Bob talk about their lives, their hopes and regrets, and what might have been.

Lucy, meanwhile, befriends one of Crosby's longest inhabitants, Olive Kitteridge, now living in a retirement community on the edge of town. They spend afternoons together in Olive's apartment, telling each other stories. Stories about people they have known – "unrecorded lives," Olive calls them – reanimating them, and, in the process, imbuing their lives with meaning.

Kevin Sullivan

The Longest Winter (Historical). 411 pages.

Terry is a British doctor on a mission to rescue a sick child in urgent need of life-saving surgery.

Brad is an American journalist desperately trying to save his reputation following the disasters of his last posting.

Milena is a young woman from Eastern Bosnia who has fled from her home and her husband, seeking refuge from betrayal amid the devastation of besieged Sarajevo.

In the aftermath of the assassination of a government minister, three life stories are intertwined in a dramatic quest for redemption.

Christina Sweeney-Baird

The End of Men (Thriller) 403 pages

Glasgow, 2025. Dr Amanda Maclean is called to treat a young man with a mild fever. Within three hours he dies. The mysterious illness sweeps through the hospital with deadly speed. This is how it begins.

The victims are all men.

Dr Maclean raises the alarm, but the sickness spreads to every corner of the globe. Threatening families. Governments. Countries. Can they find a cure before it's too late? Will this be the story of the end of the world – or its salvation?

Lydia Syson

Mr Peacock's Possessions (Historical). pages.

Oceania 1879. A family of settlers from New Zealand are the sole inhabitants of a remote volcanic island.

For two years they have struggled with the harsh reality of trying to make this unforgiving place a paradise they can call their own. At last, a ship appears.

The six Pacific Islanders on board have travelled eight hundred miles across the ocean in search of work and new horizons. Hopes are high for all, until a vulnerable boy vanishes. In their search for the lost child, settlers and newcomers together uncover far more than they were looking for. The island's secrets force them all to question their deepest convictions.

Kate Tempest

The Bricks that Built the Houses (Literary). 399 pages.

Young Londoners Becky, Harry and Leon are leaving the city in a fourth-hand Ford Cortina with a suitcase full of money. They are also leaving behind Pete, Becky's boyfriend, at his surprise birthday party. Moving back in time - and into the heart of London - *The Bricks that Built the Houses* explores a cross-section of contemporary urban life with a powerful moral microscope, giving us intimate stories of hidden lives, and showing us that good intentions don't always lead to the right decisions.

Sandi Toksvig

Between the Stops: The View of my Life from the Top of the Number 12 Bus (Non-fiction). 320 pages.

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

Yusuf Toropov

Jihadi: A Love Story (Thriller). 395 pages.

A former intelligence agent stands accused of terrorism, held without charge in a secret overseas prison.

His memoir is in the hands of a brilliant but erratic psychologist whose annotations paint a much darker picture. As the story unravels, we are forced to assess the truth for ourselves, and decide not only what really happened on one fateful overseas assignment but who is the real terrorist.

Amor Towles

A Gentleman in Moscow (Historical). 480 pages.

In 1922 Count Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal. He 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 a doorway into a much larger world of emotional discovery.

Rose Tremain

Absolutely and Forever (Literary). 180 pages.

Marianne is fifteen when she falls helplessly and absolutely in love with Simon. Simon owns a Morris Minor, is in his final year at school and has a dazzling future ahead of him. Desperate to escape the stifling 1950s suburbs she has been raised in, Marianne feels sure she will be able to find true happiness with him.

However a twist of fate sees Simon's glittering future dashed, and with it, Marianne's dreams. He flees the country and Marianne, realising she will now have to make a life of her own, moves to London determined to reinvent herself. But Marianne cannot let go of that first all-encompassing love and all the while Simon is in Paris, nursing a secret that will alter everything.

Rose Tremain

Lily (Historical). 275 pages.

London, 1850. On a freezing winter's night, a baby is abandoned at the gates of a park only to be saved by a young policeman and taken to the Foundling Hospital.

After suffering years of brutal hardship at the Hospital, Lily is released into the world of Victorian London. But she is hiding a dreadful secret... When Lily and the policeman meet again, Lily is convinced that he holds the key to her happiness. But might he also be the one to uncover her crime and so condemn her to death?

Chris Van Tulleken

Ultra-Processed People (Non-Fiction). 416 pages.

We have entered a new 'age of eating' where most of our calories come from an entirely novel set of substances called Ultra-Processed Food, food which is industrially processed and designed and marketed to be addictive. But do we really know what it's doing to our bodies?

Join Chris in his travels through the world of food science and a UPF diet to discover what's really going on. Find out why exercise and willpower can't save us, and what UPF is really doing to our bodies, our health, our weight, and the planet (hint: nothing good).

For too long we've been told we just need to make different choices, when really we're living in a food environment that makes it nigh-on impossible. So this is a book about our rights. The right to know what we eat and what it does to our bodies and the right to good, affordable food.

Anne Tyler

Redhead by the Side of the Road (Literary) 178 pages

Micah Mortimer measures out his days running errands for work, maintaining an impeccable cleaning regime and going for runs (7:15, every morning). He is in a long-term relationship with his woman friend Cassia, but they live apart. His carefully calibrated life is regular, steady, balanced.

But then the order of things starts to tilt. Cassia is threatened with eviction, and when a teenager shows up at Micah's door claiming to be his son, he is confronted with another surprise he seems poorly equipped to handle.

Can Micah, a man to whom those around him always seem just out of reach, find a way back to his perfectly imperfect love story?

Inga Vesper

Long, Long Afternoon (Crime). 402 pages.

It's the summer of 1959, and the well-trimmed lawns of Sunnyslakes, California, wilt under the sun. At some point during the long, long afternoon, Joyce Haney, wife, mother, vanishes from her home, leaving behind two terrified children and a bloodstain on the kitchen floor.

While the Haney's neighbours get busy organising search parties, it is Ruby Wright, the family's 'help', who may hold the key to this unsettling mystery.

Ruby knows more about the secrets behind Sunnyslakes' starched curtains than anyone, and it isn't long before the detective in charge of the case wants her help. But what might it cost her to get involved? In these long hot summer afternoons, simmering with lies, mistrust and prejudice, it could only take one spark for this whole 'perfect' world to set alight . . .

Salley Vickers

The Gardener (Literary). 304 pages.

Artist, Hassie Days, and her sister, Margot, buy a run down Jacobean house in Hope Wenlock on the Welsh Marches. While Margot continues her London life in high finance, Hassie is left alone to work the large, long-neglected garden. She is befriended by eccentric, sharp-tongued, Miss Foot, who recommends, Murat, an Albanian migrant, made to feel out of place among the locals, to help Hassie in the garden. As she works the garden in Murat's peaceful company, Hassie ruminates on her past life: the sibling rivalry that tainted her childhood and the love affair that left her with painful, unanswered questions. But as she begins to explore the history of the house and the mysterious nearby wood, old hurts begin to fade as she experiences the healing power of nature and discovers other worlds.

Éric Vuillard

The Order of the Day (Historical). 160 pages.

The Order of the Day tells the story of the pivotal meetings which took place between the European powers in the run-up to World War Two. What emerges is a fascinating and incredibly moving account of failed diplomacy, broken relationships, and the catastrophic momentum which led to conflict. The titans of German industry – set to prosper under the Nazi government – gather to lend their support to Adolf Hitler. The Austrian Chancellor realizes too late that he has wandered into a trap, as Hitler delivers the ultimatum that will lay the groundwork for Germany's annexation of Austria. Winston Churchill joins Neville Chamberlain for a farewell luncheon held in honour of Joachim von Ribbentrop: German Ambassador to England, soon to be Foreign Minister in the Nazi government, and future defendant at the Nuremberg trials. This unforgettable novel tells the tragic story of how the actions of a few powerful men brought the world to the brink of war.

Ocean Vuong

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous (Literary). 242 pages.

'On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous' is a letter from a son to a mother who cannot read. Written when the speaker, Little Dog, is in his late twenties, the letter unearths a family's history that began before he was born - a history whose epicentre is rooted in Vietnam - and serves as a doorway into parts of his life his mother has never known, all of it leading to an unforgettable revelation. At once a witness to the fraught yet undeniable love between a single mother and her son, it is also a brutally honest exploration of race, class, and masculinity.

Evelyn Waugh

Brideshead Revisited (Classic). 340 pages.

Brideshead Revisited is Evelyn Waugh's stunning novel of duty and desire set amongst the decadent, faded glory of the English aristocracy in the run-up to the Second World War. It tells the story of Charles Ryder's infatuation with the Marchmains and the rapidly disappearing world of privilege they inhabit. Enchanted first by Sebastian Flyte at Oxford, then by his doomed Catholic family, in particular his remote sister, Julia, Charles comes finally to recognise his spiritual and social distance from them.

Robert Webb

Come Again (Literary). 304 pages.

All hell has broken loose in Kate Marsden's life. Her husband has died, she's lost her job and now she's pushed the last of her friends away. Then one day, she wakes up in the wrong body - and the wrong year. She's eighteen again and it's her first day of university. Which means today's the day she'll meet Luke, her future husband, for the first time.

If they can fall in love again, Kate might just be able to save him second time around.

Charmaine Wilkerson

Black Cake (Historical). 432 pages.

Eleanor Bennett won't let her secrets die with her . . .

When Eleanor's estranged children Benny and Byron reunite for her funeral, they receive an unexpected inheritance. First, a traditional Caribbean black cake, to remind them of their roots. Second, the story of a decades-old murder that shatters everything they thought they knew about their mother.

But as Benny and Byron unravel their family's troubled past, will the truth push them further apart? Or will it reunite them and fulfil Eleanor's final wish?

Ryan Wilson

Let That Be a Lesson (Non-fiction). 280 pages.

From the age of eight, Ryan Wilson dreamed of being a teacher. This is the inside story of his time at the chalkface, from fresh-faced trainee with grand ideals to exhausted assistant head battling ever-changing demands.

It is a tribute, too, to the colleagues who befriended him and to the students who inspired him. Above all, it's about the lessons they taught him: how to be patient and resilient, how to live authentically and how to value every day.

Tara June Winch

The Yield (Literary). 352 pages.

Knowing that he will soon die, Albert "Poppy" Gondiwindi has one final task he must fulfill. A member of the indigenous Wiradjuri tribe, he has spent his adult life in Prosperous House and the town of Massacre Plains, a small enclave on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River. Before he takes his last breath, Poppy is determined to pass on the language of his people, the traditions of his ancestors, and everything that was ever remembered by those who came before him.

After his passing, Poppy's granddaughter, August, returns home from Europe, where she has lived the past ten years, to attend his burial. Her overwhelming grief is compounded by the pain, anger, and sadness of memory—of growing up in poverty before her mother's incarceration, of the racism she and her people endured, of the mysterious disappearance of her sister when they were children; an event that has haunted her and changed her life. Her homecoming is bittersweet as she confronts the love of her kin and news that Prosperous is to be repossessed by a mining company. Determined to make amends and honour Poppy and her family, she vows to save their land—a quest guided by the voice of her grandfather that leads into the past, the stories of her people, the secrets of the river.

Sarah Winman

Still Life (Historical). 438 pages.

1944, Italy. As bombs fall around them, two strangers meet in the ruined wine cellar of a Tuscan villa and share an extraordinary evening.

Ulysses Temper is a young British soldier, Evelyn Skinner a 64-year-old art historian living life on her own terms. She has come to salvage paintings from the wreckage of war and relive memories of her youth when her heart was stolen by an Italian maid in a particular room with a view. Ulysses' chance encounter with Evelyn will transform his life – and all those who love him back home in London – forever.

Sarah Winman

Tin Man (Literary). 197 pages.

This novel begins with a painting won in a raffle: 15 sunflowers, hung on the wall by a woman who believes that men and boys are capable of beautiful things. And then there are two boys, Ellis and Michael, who are inseparable. And the boys become men, and then Annie walks into their lives, and it changes nothing and everything.

Raynor Winn

The Salt Path (Non-fiction). pages.

Just days after Raynor learns that Moth, her husband of 32 years, is terminally ill, their home is taken away and they lose their livelihood. With nothing left and little time, they make the brave and impulsive decision to walk the 630 miles of the sea-swept South West Coast Path, from Somerset to Dorset, via Devon and Cornwall.

Carrying only the essentials for survival on their backs, they live wild in the ancient, weathered landscape of cliffs, sea and sky. Yet through every step, every encounter and every test along the way, their walk becomes a remarkable journey.

The Salt Path is an honest and life-affirming true story of coming to terms with grief and the healing power of the natural world.

Elizabeth H Winthrop

Mercy Seat (Historical). 272 pages.

As the sun begins to set over Louisiana one October day in 1943, a young black man faces the final hours of his life: at midnight, eighteen-year-old Willie Jones will be executed by electric chair for raping a white girl - a crime some believe he did not commit. In a tale taut with tension, events unfold hour by hour from the perspectives of nine people involved.

Naomi Wood

Mrs Hemingway (Literary). 317 pages.

Four extraordinary women will learn what it means to love the most famous writer of his generation, and each will be forced to ask herself how far she will go to remain his wife.

Virginia Woolf

Orlando (Classic). 215 pages.

During the course of this extraordinary novel, an Elizabethan nobleman not only transforms into a woman, but is also no older than thirty-six over three centuries later. Intrigued? You will be!

John Wyndham

The Midwich Cuckoos (Science fiction). 220 pages.

In the sleepy English village of Midwich a mysterious silver object appears and the the inhabitants fall unconscious. A day later the object is gone and everyone wakens unharmed - except that all the women in the village are discovered to be pregnant. The Midwich Cuckoos is the classic tale of aliens in our midst, exploring how we respond when confronted by those who are innately superior to us in very conceivable way.

Hafsa Zayyan

We Are All Birds of Uganda (Literary). 359 pages.

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, senses an emptiness in what he thought was the life of his dreams. Called back to his family home by an unexpected tragedy, Sameer begins to find the missing pieces of himself not in his future plans, but in a past he never knew.