

The Reading Group Collection

Cheshire Libraries



Updated June 2017

Peter Ackroyd: The Lambs of London – An ambitious young bookseller discovers a document in the handwriting of Shakespeare, and takes Charles and Mary Lamb into his confidence - soon scholars and actors alike are beating a path to the little bookshop in Holborn Passage. 224 pages

Sade Adeniran: Imagine This – A compelling story about the human spirit and resilience against the odds. London-born Lola is sent to live a small Nigerian village where her struggle for survival begins. 331 pages

Isabel Allende: House of Spirits - Spanning four generations, Isabel Allende's magnificent family saga is populated by a memorable, often eccentric cast of characters. Together, men and women, spirits, the forces of nature and of history, converge in an unforgettable, wholly absorbing and brilliantly realised novel that is as richly entertaining as it is a masterpiece of modern literature. 496 pages

M.J Arlidge – Eeny Meeny - Rocket-paced serial-killer thriller debut. The girl emerged from the woods, barely alive. Her story was beyond belief. But it was true. Every dreadful word of it. Days later, another desperate escapee is found - and a pattern is emerging. Pairs of victims are being abducted, imprisoned then faced with a terrible choice: kill or be killed. Would you rather lose your life or lose your mind? Detective Inspector Helen Grace has faced down her own demons on her rise to the top. As she leads the investigation to hunt down this unseen monster, she learns that it may be the survivors - living calling cards - who hold the key to the case. And unless she succeeds, more innocents will die. 448 pages

Kate Atkinson: Life After Life - What if you had the chance to live your life again and again, until you finally got it right? During a snowstorm in England in 1910, a baby is born and dies before she can take her first breath. During a snowstorm in England in 1910, the same baby is born and lives to tell the tale. What if there *were* second chances? And third chances? In fact an infinite number of chances to live your life? Would you eventually be able to save the world from its own inevitable destiny? And would you even want to? Life After Life follows Ursula Todd as she lives through the turbulent events of the last century again and again. With wit and compassion, Kate Atkinson finds warmth even in life's bleakest moments, and shows an extraordinary ability to evoke the past. . 640 pages

James Atlee: Isolarium: A Different Oxford Journey – Isolarium takes its title from a type of fifteenth-century map that isolates an area in order to preserve it in detail, and that's what Atlee, sharp-eyed and armed with tape recorder and notebook, provides for Cowley Road. The former site of a leper hospital, a workhouse and a medieval well said to have miraculous healing powers, Cowley Road has little to do with the dreaming spires of the tourist's or student's Oxford. 400 pages

Margaret Atwood: The Handmaid's Tale - The Republic of Gilead offers Offred only one option: to breed. If she deviates, she will, like all dissenters, be hanged at the wall or sent out to die slowly of radiation sickness. But even a repressive state cannot obliterate desire - neither Offred's nor that of the two men on which her future hangs. A brilliant and astutely perceived evocation of

twenty-first-century America. 324 pages

Jean M Auel – The Clan of the Cave Bear - The story of Ayla begins when, as a five-year-old orphan, she is adopted by the Clan, a group of Neanderthals. Initially she inspires surprise, then wariness and finally acceptance by the Clan. She is cared for by its medicine woman, Iza, and its wise holy man, Creb. But she makes an implacable enemy of the group's future leader, Broud. He will do all he can to destroy her - but Ayla is a survivor. Jean Auel's imaginative reconstruction of pre-historic life, rich in detail of language, culture, myth and ritual, has become a set text in schools and colleges around the world. 512 pages

Martine Bailey: An Appetite for Violets - *That's how it is for us servants. No one pays you much heed; mostly you're as invisible as furniture. Yet you overhear a conversation here, and add a little gossip there. A writing desk lies open and you cannot help but read a paper. Then you find something, something you should not have found.* Irrepressible Biddy Leigh, under-cook at the foreboding Mawton Hall, only wants to marry her childhood sweetheart and set up her own tavern. But when her elderly master marries the young Lady Carinna, Biddy is unwittingly swept up in a world of travel, scheming, secrets and lies. 400 pages

Beryl Bainbridge: Bottle Factory Outing - Freda and Brenda spend their days working in an Italian-run wine bottling factory and their nights in a dismal bed-sit. A works outing offers such promise to Freda and such terror for Brenda. Passions run high on that chilly day of freedom, and life after the outing never returns to normal. An offbeat, haunting yet hilarious novel. 208 pages

Muriel Barbery: The Life of Elves - The villagers had never seen anything like it: dense white curtains of snow that instantly transformed the landscape. Not in autumn, not here in Burgundy. And on the same night a baby was discovered, dark-eyed little Maria, who would transform all their lives. Hundreds of miles away in the mountains of Abruzzo, another foundling, Clara, astonishes everyone with her extraordinary talent for piano-playing. But her gifts go far beyond simple musicianship. As a time of great danger looms, though the girls know nothing of each other, it is the bond that unites them and others like them, which will ultimately offer the only chance for good to prevail in the world. 304 pages

Jean-Dominic Bauby: The Diving Bell and the Butterfly - On 8 December 1995, Jean-Dominique Bauby suffered a massive stroke and slipped into a coma. When he regained consciousness three weeks later, the only muscle left functioning was in his left eyelid although his mind remained as active and alert as it had ever been. He spent most of 1996 writing this book, letter by letter, blinking as an alphabet was repeatedly read out to him. *The Diving-Bell and the Butterfly* was published in France on Thursday 6th March 1997. It was immediately hailed as a masterpiece. And then, three days later, he died. A remarkable book about the triumph of the human spirit and the ability to invent a life for oneself in the most appalling of circumstances. 144 pages

Robin Bayley: The Mango Orchard - The Mango Orchard is the story of parallel journeys, a hundred years apart, into the heart of Latin America. Undaunted by the passage of time and a paucity of information, Robin seeks out the places where his great-grandfather Arthur 'Arturo' Greenhalgh travelled and lived, determined to uncover his legacy. Along the road Robin encounters witches, drug dealers, a gun-toting Tasmanian Devil and an ex-Nazi diamond trader. He is threatened with deportation, offered the protection of Colombian guerrilla fighters and is comforted by the blessings of los santos. He falls in love with a beautiful Guatemalan girl with mystical powers and almost gives up his quest, until a sense of destiny drives him on to western Mexico and the discovery of much more than he had bargained for. 320 pages

Aimee Bender: The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake - On the eve of her ninth birthday, unassuming Rose Edelstein, a girl at the periphery of schoolyard games and her distracted parents' attention, bites into her mother's homemade lemon-chocolate cake and discovers she has a magical gift: she can taste her mother's emotions in the slice. She discovers this gift to her horror, for her mother - her cheerful, can-do mother - tastes of despair and desperation. Suddenly, and for the rest of her life, food becomes perilous. Anything can be revealed at any meal. Rose's gift forces her to confront the secret knowledge all families keep hidden - truths about her mother's life outside the home, her father's strange detachment and her brother's clash with the world. Yet as Rose grows up, she realises there are some secrets that even her taste buds cannot discern. *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake* is a luminous tale about the heartbreak of loving those whom you know too much about. It is profound and funny, wise and sad. 304 pages

Alan Bennett: Talking Heads 2 – Dramatic monologues written for television, reflecting social attitudes, entertaining with acute asides and moving with their insight into people's lives. 92 pages

Richard Benson: The Farm: The Story of One Family and the Countryside – When his family is forced to sell their family farm, the author reflects on how the countryside has changed in his lifetime. One family's personal history highlights the impact of globalisation and environmental changes on farming today. An engrossing read, but take note if you live in a barn conversion; you may experience irrational feelings of guilt. 240 pages

William Boyd: Any Human Heart – Logan Mountstuart's long life is both ordinary and extraordinary. A writer, spy and art dealer, Logan mixes with the men and women who shaped the twentieth century - he's also a son, a husband and a lover, and he makes the same mistakes we all do in his search for happiness. William Boyd's bestselling novel is a rich account of a life lived to the full. 490 pages

Geraldine Brooks: Year of Wonders – 1666, the plague is carried from London to a small Derbyshire village by an itinerant tailor. As villagers begin, one by one, to die, the rest face a choice. Do they flee their village in the hope of outrunning the plague or do they stay? The lord of the manor and his family pack, and leave. The rector, Michael Mompellion, argues forcefully that the villagers should stay put, isolate themselves from neighbouring towns and villages and prevent the contagion from spreading. His oratory wins the day

and the village turns in on itself. Cocooned from the outside world and ravaged by the disease, its inhabitants struggle to retain their humanity in the face of the disaster. 336 pages

Carol Rifka Brunt: *Tell the Wolves I'm Home* - There's only one person who has ever understood fourteen-year-old June Elbus, and that's her uncle, the renowned painter, Finn Weiss. Shy at school and distant from her once inseparable older sister, June can only be herself in Finn's company, he is her godfather, confident, and best friend. So when he dies far too young of a mysterious illness, June's world is turned upside down. At the funeral, she notices a strange man lingering just beyond the crowd, and a few days later, June receives a package in the mail. Inside is a beautiful teapot she recognises from Finn's apartment, and a note from Toby, the stranger, asking for an opportunity to meet. *Tell the Wolves I'm Home* is a tender story of love lost and found, an unforgettable portrait of the way compassion can make us whole again. 400 pages

Bill Bryson: *Notes from a Small Island* - After nearly two decades in Britain, Bill Bryson took the decision to move back to the States for a while but before leaving his much-loved home in North Yorkshire, Bryson insisted on taking one last trip around Britain. Turning an affectionate but ironic eye on his adopted country, his aim was to take stock of the nation's public face and private parts (as it were), and to analyse what precisely it was he loved so much about a country that had produced Marmite, a military hero whose dying wish was to be kissed by a fellow named Hardy, place names like Farleigh Wallop and Shellow Bowells, people who said 'Mustn't grumble', and Gardeners' Question Time. 352 pages

Graeme Macrae Burnet: *His Bloody Project* - Shortlisted For The Man Booker Prize 2016. The year is 1869. A brutal triple murder in a remote community in the Scottish Highlands leads to the arrest of a young man by the name of Roderick Macrae. A memoir written by the accused makes it clear that he is guilty, but it falls to the country's finest legal and psychiatric minds to uncover what drove him to commit such merciless acts of violence. Was he mad? Only the persuasive powers of his advocate stand between Macrae and the gallows. Graeme Macrae Burnet tells an irresistible and original story about the provisional nature of truth, even when the facts seem clear. *His Bloody Project* is a mesmerising literary thriller set in an unforgiving landscape where the exercise of power is arbitrary. 288 pages

Jessie Burton: *The Miniaturist* – On an autumn day in 1686, eighteen-year-old Nella Oortman arrives at a grand house in Amsterdam, to begin her new life as the wife of wealthy merchant Johannes Brandt. He presents her with an extraordinary wedding gift: a cabinet-sized replica of their home. It is to be furnished by an elusive miniaturist, whose tiny creations mirror their real-life counterparts in unexpected ways... 433 pages

Tess Callahan: *April & Oliver* - April and Oliver are soul mates, the attraction between them has always been palpable. But as the years have passed this once inseparable couple have become strangers. Only after the sudden death of April's brother do their wildly different lives collide once again. Oliver, the responsible, newly engaged law student, finds himself

drawn ever closer to the reckless, mystifying April - and cracks begin to appear in his carefully constructed life. Even as Oliver attempts to rescue his childhood friend from her grief, her menacing boyfriend, and herself, it is obvious that Oliver has some secrets of his own - secrets he has never shared with anyone. April alone knows, and her reappearance derails him. But is it April's life that is unravelling, or his own? And will their magnetic attraction for one another ever lead to happiness? Or are they better apart? 336 pages

Raymond Carver: What We Talk About When We Talk About Love - This powerful collection of stories, set in the mid-West among the lonely men and women who drink, fish and play cards to ease the passing of time, was the first by Raymond Carver to be published in the UK. With its spare, colloquial narration and razor-sharp sense of how people really communicate, the collection was to become one of the most influential literary works of the 1980s. 144 pages

Juan Chang: Wild Swans - Through the lives of three different women - grandmother, mother and daughter - this book tells the story of 20th-century China. At times scarcely credible in the details it reveals of the suffering of millions of ordinary Chinese people, it is an unforgettable record of tyranny, hope and ultimate survival under conditions of extreme harshness. 720 pages

Bruce Chatwin: On the Black Hill - Bruce Chatwin's fascination with nomads and wanderlust represents itself in reverse in *On the Black Hill*, a tale of two brothers (identical twins) who never go anywhere. They stay in the farmhouse on the English-Welsh border where they were born, tilling the rough soil and sleeping in the same bed, touched only occasionally by the advance of the 20th century. Smacking of a Welsh *Ethan Frome*, Chatwin evokes the lonely tragedies of farm life, and above all the vibrant land of Wales. 262 pages

Tracy Chevalier: Burning Bright - Flames and funerals, circus feats and seduction, neighbours and nakedness: Tracy Chevalier's *Burning Bright* sparkles with historical drama. London 1792. The Kellaways move from familiar rural Dorset to the tumult of a cramped, unforgiving city. They are leaving behind a terrible loss, a blow that only a completely new life may soften. Against the backdrop of a city jittery over the increasingly bloody French Revolution, a surprising bond forms between Jem, the youngest Kellaway boy, and streetwise Londoner Maggie Butterfield. Their friendship takes a dramatic turn when they become entangled in the life of their neighbour, the printer, poet and radical, William Blake. He is a guiding spirit as Jem and Maggie navigate the unpredictable, exhilarating passage from innocence to experience. Their journey inspires one of Blake's most entrancing works. Georgian London is recreated as vividly in *Burning Bright* as 17th-century Delft was in Tracy Chevalier's bestselling masterpiece, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. 400 pages

Chris Cleave: The Other Hand – We don't want to tell you too much about this book. It is a truly special story and we don't want to spoil it. Nevertheless, you need to know something, so we will just say this: It is extremely funny, but the African beach scene is horrific. The story starts there, but the book doesn't. And it's what happens afterwards that is most important. Once you

have read it, you'll want to tell everyone about it. When you do, please don't tell them what happens either. The magic is in how it unfolds. 400 pages

J M Coetzee: Disgrace – Winner of the 1999 Booker Prize. A disturbing, but beautifully written, story: in the new South Africa, a university professor is accused of sexual harassment. 219 pages

Alain de Botton: Status Anxiety - We all worry about what others think of us. We all long to succeed and fear failure. We all suffer - to a greater or lesser degree, usually privately and with embarrassment - from status anxiety. For the first time, Alain de Botton gives a name to this universal condition and sets out to investigate both its origins and possible solutions. He looks at history, philosophy, economics, art and politics - and reveals the many ingenious ways that great minds have overcome their worries. The result is a book that is not only entertaining and thought-provoking - but genuinely wise and helpful as well. 320 pages.

Len Deighton: SS-GB - A special edition of Deighton's classic thriller, the first and certainly greatest 'what-if?' novel about the Second World War, to tie in with the new major BBC series. In February 1941 British Command surrendered to the Nazis. Churchill has been executed, the King is in the Tower and the SS are in Whitehall... For nine months Britain has been occupied - a blitzed, depressed and dingy country. However, it's 'business as usual' at Scotland Yard run by the SS when Detective Inspector Archer is assigned to a routine murder case. Life must go on. But when SS Standartenfuhrer Huth arrives from Berlin with orders from the great Himmler himself to supervise the investigation, the resourceful Archer finds himself caught up in a high level, all action, espionage battle. 400 pages

Patrick deWitt: The Sisters Brothers - an offbeat Western about a reluctant assassin and his murderous brother who are on the trail of a man named Hermann Kermit Warm. On the way, the brothers have a series of unsettling and violent experiences in the Darwinian landscape of Gold Rush America. A dark comedy about the things you tell yourself in order to be able to continue to live the life you find yourself in, and what happens when those stories no longer work. 272 pages

Joan Didion: A Year of Magical Thinking - A stunning book and the later stage adaptation was a Broadway hit, now transferred to the UK and starring Vanessa Redgrave. Several days before Christmas 2003, John Gregory Dunne and Joan Didion saw their only daughter fall ill. Days later John suffered a massive and fatal coronary. In a second, a partnership of 40 years was over. This powerful book is an exploration of an intensely personal yet universal experience: a portrait of a marriage, and a life, in good times and bad. 227 pages

Anthony Doerr: All The Light We Cannot See – A beautiful, ambitious novel about a blind French girl and an orphan German boy whose paths collide in occupied France, as both try to survive the devastation of World War II. Deftly interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another. Winner of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. 530 pages

Ben Dolnick: Zoology – Henry lands a job at the Central Park Children's Zoo. As the months unfold in a haze of jazz bars, ill-advised romance and hard truths about family, Henry learns what it is to love -- and to lose -- in this hilarious, inventive and touching debut novel. 352 pages

Jenny Downham: Before I Die - Tessa has just a few months to live. Fighting back against hospital visits, endless tests, drugs with excruciating side-effects, Tessa compiles a list. It's her To Do Before I Die list. And number one is sex. Released from the constraints of 'normal' life, Tessa tastes new experiences to make her feel alive while her failing body struggles to keep up. Tessa's feelings, her relationships with her father and brother, her estranged mother, her best friend, her new boyfriend, all are painfully crystallized in the precious weeks before Tessa's time finally runs out. BEFORE I DIE is a brilliantly-crafted novel, heartbreaking yet astonishingly life-affirming. It will take you to the very edge. 336 pages

Clare Dudman: 98 Reasons for Being – In 1850s Frankfurt, a Jewish girl named Hannah Meyer enters the town asylum, rumoured to be suffering from nymphomania. She is treated by Dr Heinrich Hoffmann, physician and famed author of the book of children's tales, *Struwwelpeter*, who uses every method from ice packs to electrodes in an effort to cure her. Nothing works, until he resorts to talking - telling her anecdotes from his youth, revealing the case histories of Hannah's fellow patients, confessing to his troubled home life. Only then does Hannah begin to yield her haunting tale of love, prejudice and transgression. 347 pages

Carol Ann Duffy: The World's Wife – An extremely original and playful collection from one of the nation's leading contemporary poets. Here, Duffy takes notable male figures from history and then presents their story from the perspective of their lesser-known wives and sisters. Meet Mrs Darwin, the Kray sisters, Mrs Midas, Frau Freud and a cast of others. Shortlisted for the T S Eliot Prize and the Forward Poetry Prize: Best Collection. 200 pages

Patricia Duncker: Miss Webster and Cherif - Elizabeth Webster is a spinster pushing seventy. Forced out of her teaching job, she unleashes her sharp tongue and dogmatic opinions on everyone in the English village of Little Blessington. Then, one night, she grinds to a dead halt. To recover from this illness, she travels to North Africa where she has a brush with terrorism - not that she cares about politics. Three weeks after Miss Webster has returned home her doorbell rings. There stands a beautiful young Arab man carrying a large suitcase. Who is he, why is he there and what does he want? 256 pages

George Eliot: Adam Bede - Carpenter Adam Bede is in love with the beautiful Hetty Sorrel, but unknown to him, he has a rival in the local squire's son Arthur Donnithorne. Hetty is soon attracted by Arthur's seductive charm and they begin to meet in secret. The relationship is to have tragic consequences that reach far beyond the couple themselves, touching not just Adam Bede, but many others, not least pious Methodist Preacher Dinah Morris. A tale of seduction, betrayal, love and deception, the plot of Adam Bede has the quality of an English folk song. Within the setting of Hayslope, a small, rural community, Eliot brilliantly creates a sense of earthy reality,

making the landscape itself as vital a presence in the novel as that of her characters themselves. 528 pages

Tan Twan Eng – The Garden of Evening Mists - In the lush highlands of Malaya, a woman sets out to build a memorial to her sister, killed at the hands of the Japanese during the brutal Occupation of their country. Yun Ling's quest leads her to 'The Garden of Evening Mists', and to Aritomo, a man of extraordinary skill and reputation, once the gardener of the Emperor of Japan. When she accepts his offer to become his apprentice, she begins a journey into her past, inextricably linked with the secrets of her troubled country's history. 352 pages

Ellen Feldman: The Boy Who Loved Anne Frank – On February 16, 1944, Anne Frank recorded in her diary that Peter, whom she at first disliked but eventually came to love, had confided to her that if he got out alive, he would reinvent himself entirely. This is the story of what might have happened if the boy in hiding survived to become a man. Based on extensive research of Peter van Pels and the strange and disturbing life Anne Frank's diary took on after her death, this is a novel about the memory of death, the death of memory, and the inescapability of the past. 261 pages

Elena Ferrante: My Brilliant Friend

A modern masterpiece from one of Italy's most acclaimed authors, *My Brilliant Friend* is a rich, intense and generous hearted story about two friends, Elena and Lila. Ferrante's inimitable style lends itself perfectly to a meticulous portrait of these two women that is also the story of a nation and a touching meditation on the nature of friendship. 336 pages

Nathan Filer – The Shock of the Fall – “I'll tell you what happened because it will be a good way to introduce my brother. His name's Simon. I think you're going to like him. I really do. But in a couple of pages he'll be dead. And he was never the same after that.” There are books you can't stop reading, which keep you up all night. There are books which let us into the hidden parts of life and make them vividly real. There are books which, because of the sheer skill with which every word is chosen, linger in your mind for days. *The Shock of the Fall* is all of these books. *The Shock of the Fall* is an extraordinary portrait of one man's descent into mental illness. It is a brave and groundbreaking novel from one of the most exciting new voices in fiction. 320 pages

F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Great Gatsby - brilliant fable of the hedonistic excess and tragic reality of 1920s America. Jay Gatsby is the man who has everything. But one thing will always be out of his reach ... Everybody who is anybody is seen at his glittering parties. Day and night his Long Island mansion buzzes with bright young things drinking, dancing and debating his mysterious character. For Gatsby - young, handsome, fabulously rich - always seems alone in the crowd, watching and waiting, though no one knows what for. Beneath the shimmering surface of his life he is hiding a secret: a silent longing that can never be fulfilled. And soon this destructive obsession will force his world to unravel. 140 pages

Margaret Forster: My Life in Houses - So begins Margaret Forster's journey through the houses she's lived in, from that sparkling new council house, to her

beloved London home of today. This is a book about what houses are to us, the effect they have on the way we live our lives and the changing nature of our homes: from blacking grates and outside privies; to cities dominated by bedsits and lodgings; to the houses of today converted back into single dwellings. Finally, it is a personal inquiry into the meaning of home. 272 pages

Esther Freud: Lucky Break - It is their first day at Drama Arts, and the circle of huddled, nervous students are told in no uncertain terms that here, unlike at any other drama school, they will be taught to Act. To exist in their own world on the stage. But outside is the real world - a pitiless, alluring place in which each of them in their most fervent dreams, hopes to flourish and excel. Nell, insecure and dumpy, wonders if she will ever be cast as anything other than the maid. She'll never compete, she knows this, with the multitude of confident, long-legged beauties thronging the profession-most notably Charlie, whose effortless ascendance is nothing less than she expects. While Dan, ambitious and serious, has his sights fixed on Hamlet, as well as on fiery, rebellious Jemma. Over the following decade these young actors will grapple with haphazard tours, illogical auditions, unobtainable agents, deluxe caravans, rocky relationships and red-carpet premieres. This dazzling new novel from Esther Freud uncovers a world of ruthless ambition, uncertain alliances and the many-sided holy grail of Success. 320 pages

Neil Gaiman: The Ocean at the End of the Lane

Dive into a magical novel of memory and the adventure of childhood, from one of the brightest writers of our generation.

It began for our narrator forty years ago when the family lodger stole their car and committed suicide in it, stirring up ancient powers best left undisturbed. Dark creatures from beyond the world are on the loose, and it will take everything our narrator has just to stay alive. There is primal horror here, and menace unleashed - within his family and from the forces that have gathered to destroy it. His only defence is three women, on a farm, at the end of the lane. The youngest of them claims that her duck pond is an ocean. The oldest can remember the Big Bang. *The Ocean at The End of The Lane* is a fable that reshapes modern fantasy: moving, terrifying and elegiac. 272 pages

Andrew Greig: That Summer - The Independent's reviewer said that this nostalgic evocation of the Battle of Britain reminds us of the ephemerality of love in time of war. Narrated by fighter pilot Len and Stella, a radar operator, the romance is played out against a background of dogfights and casualties. Freed from the constraints of peacetime the lovers quickly shed their inhibitions and seize the day. 271 pages

Jay Griffiths: Wild: an Elemental Journey - Part travel book, part political manifesto and deeply personal throughout, *Wild* has inspired fervent reviews and impassioned responses as well as a fair amount of controversy and debate. 480 pages

Mohsin Hamid: The Reluctant Fundamentalist - Among the brightest and best of his graduating class at Princeton, Changez is snapped up by an elite firm and thrives on New York and the intensity of his work. But in the wake of September 11, he finds his position in the city he loves suddenly overturned, and his relationship with Erica eclipsed by the reawakened ghosts of her past.

And Changez's own identity is in seismic shift as well, unearthing allegiances more fundamental than money, power, and perhaps even love. 224 pages

Emma Healey: Elizabeth is Missing – Meet Maud. Maud is forgetful. She makes a cup of tea and doesn't remember to drink it. She goes to the shops and forgets why she went. Sometimes her home is unrecognizable - or her daughter Helen seems a total stranger. But there's one thing Maud is sure of: her friend Elizabeth is missing. The note in her pocket tells her so. And no matter who tells her to stop going on about it, to leave it alone, to shut up, Maud will get to the bottom of it. Because somewhere in Maud's damaged mind lies the answer to an unsolved seventy-year-old mystery. One everyone has forgotten about. Everyone, except Maud. Winner of the Costa First Novel Award 2014. 275 pages

Joseph Heller: Catch 22 – a top 21 Big Read, this title has entered common parlance to describe a no-win situation. Set on a fictitious island, it centres on Captain Yossarian's attempts to survive the Second World War by avoiding dangerous combat duties. War is treated as an event too farcical for tears. 528 pages

Zoë Heller: Notes on a Scandal - Heller has written a fascinating tale about the complexities of relationships. The book is seemingly about Sheba a teacher who has an illicit relationship with one of her pupils. It is written from the viewpoint of her colleague, the lonely but loyal Barbara. The focus of the story shifts and becomes compelling as Barbara becomes Sheba's confidante. 256 pages

John Higgs: Stranger Than We Can Imagine: Making Sense of the Twentieth Century (non-fiction) - It is the century about which we know too much, yet understand too little. With disorientating ideas such as relativity, cubism, the id, existentialism, chaos mathematics and postmodernism to contend with, the twentieth century, John Higgs argues, cannot fit easily into a traditional historical narrative. Time then, for a new perspective. Higgs takes us on a refreshingly eclectic journey through the knotty history of the strangest of centuries. In the company of radical artists, scientists, geniuses and eccentrics, he shows us how the elegant, clockwork universe of the Victorians became increasingly woozy and uncertain; and how in the twentieth century we discovered that our world is not just stranger than we imagine, but 'stranger than we *can* imagine'. 352 pages

Patricia Highsmith: Carol - Therese first glimpses Carol in the New York department store where she is working as a sales assistant. Carol is choosing a present for her daughter; she looks preoccupied, exuding an aura of elegance as perfect as a secret. Standing there at the counter, Therese suddenly feels wholly innocent - wholly unprepared for the first shock of love. First published under a pseudonym in 1952, *Carol* is a love story told with compelling wit and eroticism, and consummate tenderness. 320 pages

Laura Hillenbrand: Unbroken - From the author of the bestselling and much-loved *Seabiscuit*, an unforgettable story of one man's journey into extremity. On a May afternoon in 1943, an Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean and disappeared, leaving only a spray of debris and a slick of

oil, gasoline, and blood. Then, on the ocean surface, a face appeared. It was that of a young lieutenant, the plane's bombardier, who was struggling to a life raft and pulling himself aboard. So began one of the most extraordinary odysseys of the Second World War. The lieutenant's name was Louis Zamperini. In boyhood, he'd been a cunning and incorrigible delinquent, breaking into houses, brawling, and fleeing his home to ride the rails. As a teenager, he had channelled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics and within sight of the four-minute mile. But when war had come, the athlete had become an airman, embarking on a journey that led to his doomed flight, a tiny raft, and a drift into the unknown. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, a foundering raft, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humour; brutality with rebellion. 500 pages

Tami Hoag: Cold, Cold Heart

Promising young TV reporter Dana Nolan has escaped from notorious serial killer Doc Holliday, and was the only one to make it out alive - but can she ever be safe? A year has passed since she survived the ordeal but she is still physically, emotionally, and psychologically scarred. In an attempt to put herself back together, Dana returns to her hometown. But it doesn't provide the comfort she expects: she struggles to recognize family and childhood friends and begins experiencing dark flashbacks. Dana decides to use her investigative skills to piece together her past and the event that made her become a reporter in the first place: the disappearance of her best friend, Casey Grant, the summer after high school graduation. But now, old friends seem to be suspects, authority figures part of a cover-up. 400 pages

Ellen Horan: 31 Bond Street - Based on a true story, mystery and intrigue in pre-Civil War New York. The sensational murder of Dr. Harvey Burdell in his lower Manhattan home made front-page news across the United States in 1857. "Who killed Dr. Burdell?" was a question that gripped the nation. 31 Bond Street, a debut novel by Ellen Horan, interweaves fiction with actual events in a clever historical narrative that blends romance, politics, greed and sexual intrigue in a suspenseful drama. 320 pages

Nancy Horan: Loving Frank – In the early 1900s polite Chicago society was rocked by a terrible scandal as renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright ran off with Mamah Cheney, a client's wife. Abandoning their families and reputations, the lovers fled to Europe and exile. A moving, passionate and timeless love story. 432 pages

Nick Hornby: High Fidelity - Hornby's narrator is a thirty-something bloke who runs a London record store, selling albums recorded the old-fashioned way on vinyl - and he is having a tough time making other transitions as well, specifically to adulthood. Part love story, most entertaining, though, are the hilarious arguments over arcane matters of pop music. 253 pages

Khaled Hosseini: A Thousand Splendid Suns - Mariam is only fifteen when she is sent to Kabul to marry Rasheed. Nearly two decades later, a friendship grows between Mariam and a local teenager, Laila, as strong as the ties

between mother and daughter. When the Taliban take over, life becomes a desperate struggle against starvation, brutality and fear. Yet love can move a person to act in unexpected ways, and lead them to overcome the most daunting obstacles with a startling heroism. A chronicle of Afghan history, and a deeply moving story of family, friendship, and the salvation to be found in love. 384 pages

Kazuo Ishiguro: *The Buried Giant* - The new novel from the author of *Never Let Me Go* and the Booker Prize winning *The Remains of the Day*. The Romans have long since departed, and Britain is steadily declining into ruin, but at least the wars that once ravaged the country have ceased. *The Buried Giant* begins as a couple, Axl and Beatrice, set off across a troubled land of mist and rain in the hope of finding a son they have not seen for years. They expect to face many hazards - some strange and other-worldly - but they cannot yet foresee how their journey will reveal to them dark and forgotten corners of their love for one another. Sometimes savage, often intensely moving, Kazuo Ishiguro's first novel in a decade is about lost memories, love, revenge and war. 384 pages

Edward P Jones: *The Known World* – Winner of both IMPAC and Pulitzer prizes, this masterful epic centres on slave life on a Southern plantation. Regarded as ‘an utterly original exploration of race, trust and the cruel truths of human nature’, this has been hailed as a landmark in modern American literature. 400 pages

Lloyd Jones: *Hand Me Down World* - This is a story about a woman. And the truck driver who mistook her for a prostitute. The old man she robbed and the hunters who smuggled her across the border. The woman whose name she stole, the wife who turned a blind eye. This is the story of a mother searching for her child. 320 pages

Wendy Jones; *The Thoughts and Happenings of Wilfred Price, Purveyor of Superior Funerals* - Everyone has to make decisions about love. Wilfred Price, overcome with emotion on a sunny spring day, proposes to a girl he barely knows at a picnic. The girl, Grace, joyfully accepts and rushes to tell her family of Wilfred's intentions. But by this time Wilfred has realised his mistake. He does not love Grace. On the verge of extricating himself, Wilfred's situation suddenly becomes more serious when Grace's father steps in. Up until this point in his life, Wilfred's existence has been blissfully simple, and the young undertaker seems unable to stop the swirling mess that now surrounds him. To add to Wilfred's emotional turmoil, he thinks he may just have met the perfect girl for him. As Wilfred struggles in an increasingly tangled web of expectation and duty, love and lies, Grace reveals a long-held secret that changes everything . . . Wendy Jones's charming first novel is a moving depiction of love and secrecy, set against the rural backdrop of a 1920s Welsh village, and beautifully told. 272 pages

Jackie Kay: *Wish I Was Here* – This fierce, funny, compassionate collection of short stories explores every facet of that most overwhelming and complicated of human emotions: love. With winning directness, Jackie Kay captures her characters' greatest joy and greatest vulnerability, exposing the moments of

tenderness, of shock, of bravery and of stupidity that accompany the search for love, the discovery of love, and, most of all, love's loss. 208 pages

Stephen Kelman: Pigeon English - Newly arrived from Ghana with his mother and older sister, eleven-year-old Harrison Opoku lives on the ninth floor of a block of flats on an inner-city housing estate. The second best runner in the whole of Year 7, Harri races through his new life in his personalised trainers - the Adidas stripes drawn on with marker pen - blissfully unaware of the very real threat all around him. With equal fascination for the local gang - the Dell Farm Crew - and the pigeon who visits his balcony, Harri absorbs the many strange elements of his new life in England: watching, listening, and learning the tricks of urban survival. But when a boy is knifed to death on the high street and a police appeal for witnesses draws only silence, Harri decides to start a murder investigation of his own. In doing so, he unwittingly endangers the fragile web his mother has spun around her family to try and keep them safe. A story of innocence and experience, hope and harsh reality, Pigeon English is a spellbinding portrayal of a boy balancing on the edge of manhood and of the forces around him that try to shape the way he falls. 263 pages

Hannah Kent: Burial Rites – Northern Iceland, 1829: a woman condemned to death for murdering her lover. A family forced to take her in. A priest tasked with absolving her. But all is not as it seems, and time is running out: winter is coming, and with it the execution date. Only she can know the truth. This is Agnes's story. Shortlisted for the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction 2014. 355 pages

Julie Kibler – Calling Me Home - A moving love story inspired by a true story and perfect for fans of *The Help*. In a time of hate, would you stand up for love? Shalerville, Kentucky, 1939. A world where black maids and handymen are trusted to raise white children and tend to white houses, but from which they are banished after dark. Sixteen-year-old Isabelle McAllister, born into wealth and privilege, finds her ordered life turned upside down when she becomes attracted to Robert, the ambitious black son of her family's housekeeper. Before long Isabelle and Robert are crossing extraordinary, dangerous boundaries and falling deeply in love. Many years later, eighty- nine-year-old Isabelle will travel from her home in Arlington, Texas, to Ohio for a funeral. With Isabelle is her hairstylist and friend, Dorrie Curtis - a black single mother with her own problems. Along the way, Isabelle will finally reveal to Dorrie the truth of her painful past: a tale of forbidden love, the consequences of which will resound for decades. 336 pages

Stephen King: Different Seasons - Each of the four stories, markedly different in tone and subject, present a journey: Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption (Hope Springs Eternal) is a tale of an innocent man who devises an exciting escape from prison; The Apt Pupil (Summer of Corruption) is the story of a golden schoolboy and an old man with a hideous past who join in a dreadful union; in The Body (Fall from Innocence) , four young boys venture into the woods and find life, death and the end of innocence and The Breathing Method (A Winter's Tale) is a macabre story told in a strange club of a woman determined to give birth...no matter what. 688 pages

Matthew Kneale: English Passengers - A big, ambitious novel with a rich

historical sweep and a host of narrative voices. Its subject is a vicar's ludicrous expedition in 1857 to the Garden of Eden in Tasmania. Meanwhile in Tasmania itself, the British settlers are alternately trying to civilise and eliminate the Aboriginal population. 480 pages

Andrey Kurkov: Death and the Penguin - A truly original debut novel, which featured in the 2005 Waverton Good Read. Set in post-soviet Ukraine, the story centres on Viktor, a would-be novelist who turns to writing obelisks - obituaries – in order to make a living, and Misha, his pet and somewhat depressed penguin. When Viktor's subjects start to die, he inadvertently gets caught up in the underworld. This is a darkly comic, satirical tale, but underneath the humour, makes serious comment on contemporary Ukraine. 240 pages

Phil LaMarche: American Youth - In this taut and powerful novel, a young teenager is confronted by a terrible moral dilemma following a firearms accident at his home. Coerced by his mother to lie about his role in the incident, he finds he has nonetheless earned the admiration of a sinister group of boys at his school - calling themselves 'American Youth', they subscribe to a twisted notion of traditional, puritanical values. As he gets sucked into their orbit, and entangled with the girlfriend of the group's leader, he struggles to hold on to a sense of right and wrong. Set in a New England town riven by social and ideological tensions - as newcomers encroach on an old rural culture - this is a classic portrait of a boy's rites of passage in an America ill at ease with itself. 240 pages

Susan Lewis: The Girl Who Came Back - When Jules Bright hears a knock on the door, the last person she expects to find is a detective bringing her the news she's feared for the last three years. Amelia Quentin is being released from prison. Jules's life is very different now to the one she'd known before Amelia shattered it completely. Knowing the girl is coming back she needs to decide what to do. Friends and family gather round, fearing for Jules's safety. They know that justice was never served; every one of them wants to make the Quentin girl pay. The question is, what will Jules do; and which of them – her or Amelia - has the most to fear? 416 pages

John Lewis-Stempel: Meadowland, the Private Life of an English Field
What really goes on in the long grass? *Meadowland* gives an unique and intimate account of an English meadow's life from January to December. In exquisite prose, John Lewis-Stempel records the passage of the seasons from cowslips in spring to the hay-cutting of summer and grazing in autumn, and includes the biographies of the animals that inhabit the grass and the soil beneath: the badger clan, the fox family, the rabbit warren, the skylark brood and the curlew pair, among others. Their births, lives, and deaths are stories that thread through the book from first page to last. 304 pages

Jim Lynch: The Highest Tide - One moonlit night Miles O'Malley goes exploring on the flats of Puget Sound. What begins as an ordinary hunt for starfish, snails, and clams is soon transformed by an astonishing sight: a beached giant squid. In this mesmerizing, beautifully wrought first novel, we witness the dramatic sea change for both Miles and the coastline that he adores over the course of a summer — one that will culminate with the highest

tide in fifty years. 272 pages

Cormac McCarthy: The Road - A father and his son walk alone through burned America, heading through the ravaged landscape to the coast. Awesome in the totality of its vision, it is an unflinching meditation on the worst and the best that we are capable of: ultimate destructiveness, desperate tenacity, and the tenderness that keeps two people alive in the face of total devastation. 256 pages

Helen Macdonald: H is for Hawk – As a child, Helen Macdonald was determined to become a falconer, learning the arcane terminology and reading all the classic books. Years later, when her father died and she was struck deeply by grief, she became obsessed with the idea of training her own goshawk. She bought Mabel for £800 on a Scottish quayside and took her home to Cambridge, ready to embark on the long, strange business of trying to train this wildest of animals. *H is for Hawk* is an unflinchingly honest account of Macdonald's struggle with grief during the difficult process of the hawk's taming and her own un-taming. This is a book about memory, nature and nation, and how it might be possible to reconcile death with life and love. Winner of the Costa Book of the Year, and Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction. 283 pages

Ian McEwan: The Children Act - A brilliant, emotionally wrenching novel from the author of *Atonement* and *Amsterdam*. Fiona Maye, a leading High Court judge, renowned for her fierce intelligence and sensitivity is called on to try an urgent case. For religious reasons, a seventeen-year-old boy is refusing the medical treatment that could save his life. Time is running out. She visits the boy in hospital – an encounter which stirs long-buried feelings in her and powerful new emotions in the boy. But it is Fiona who must ultimately decide whether he lives or dies and her judgement will have momentous consequences for them both. 224 pages

Clare Mackintosh: I Let You Go - A tragic accident. It all happened so quickly. She couldn't have prevented it. Could she? In a split second, Jenna Gray's world descends into a nightmare. Her only hope of moving on is to walk away from everything she knows to start afresh. Desperate to escape, Jenna moves to a remote cottage on the Welsh coast, but she is haunted by her fears, her grief and her memories of a cruel November night that changed her life forever. Slowly, Jenna begins to glimpse the potential for happiness in her future. But her past is about to catch up with her, and the consequences will be devastating. 384 pages

Adrian McKinty: The Bloomsday Dead - Michael Forsythe is living in Lima under the FBI's Witness Protection Program but returns to Ireland leaving a trail of mayhem. Break-neck action and wry literary references; McKinty's distinctly Irish voice packs a ferocious punch. 304 pages

Anna McPartlin: The One I Love - Once Jane and Alexandra were inseparable - sharing adventures, secrets and big dreams for the future. But when Jane got pregnant at seventeen, they drifted apart. Seventeen years later, Jane discovers Alexandra has disappeared and she sets about helping Alexandra's broken-hearted husband, Tom, to find his wife. But in searching for Alexandra, Jane is about to confront some big questions about herself. Like,

what happened to the high-spirited seventeen-year-old she once was? What will happen if she stops trying to control the world? And does love really mean letting people go? Two fractured people come together accidentally and in one another they find strength, friendship - and even the beginnings of hope. 368 pages

Sarita Mandanna: Tiger Hills - When a flock of herons wheeled overhead at the moment of Devi's birth, it seemed that her life would be touched by fate... As a child, Devi befriends a young boy whose mother has died in tragic circumstances. Over the years, Devi and Devanna become inseparable as they go to school together and learn more about the extended family that surrounds them. However things change when Devi meets Muthi, a young man who has killed a tiger and is feted as a hero. Although she is still a child and Muthi is a man, Devi vows that one day she will marry him. It is this love that will gradually drive a wedge between her and her friend Devanna, who has been taken under the wing of a local missionary. For Devi is blind to the fact that Devanna himself has fallen for her. Devanna leaves the village to study medicine, in the hope that when he returns Devi will see his worth and return his love, but then a tragedy changes the fate of all three, with far-reaching consequences for the generations to come. 624 pages

Hilary Mantel: Beyond Black – If you like black humour you'll appreciate this bizarre view of the world of spiritualists and mediums. It's the contrast of the mundane, messages from 'spiritside' criticising a loved one's choice of new kitchen units, with the threatening presence of those most unwelcome spirits that gives this book an edge. 480 pages

Hilary Mantel: Wolf Hall - Winner of the Man Booker Prize 2009. England, the 1520s. Henry VIII is on the throne, but has no heir. Cardinal Wolsey is his chief advisor, charged with securing the divorce the pope refuses to grant. Into this atmosphere of distrust and need comes Thomas Cromwell, first as Wolsey's clerk, and later his successor. Cromwell is a wholly original man: the son of a brutal blacksmith, a political genius, a briber, a charmer, a bully, a man with a delicate and deadly expertise in manipulating people and events. Ruthless in pursuit of his own interests, he is as ambitious in his wider politics as he is for himself. His reforming agenda is carried out in the grip of a self-interested parliament and a king who fluctuates between romantic passions and murderous rages. From one of our finest living writers, 'Wolf Hall' is that very rare thing: a truly great English novel, one that explores the intersection of individual psychology and wider politics. With a vast array of characters, and richly overflowing with incident, it peels back history to show us Tudor England as a half-made society, moulding itself with great passion, suffering and courage. 400 pages

Alexander Masters: Stuart; A Life Backwards - The story of a remarkable friendship between a reclusive writer and illustrator and a chaotic, knife-wielding beggar whom he gets to know during a campaign to release two charity workers from prison. Interwoven into this is Stuart's confession: the story of his life, told backwards. With humour, compassion (and exasperation) Masters slowly works back through post-office heists, prison riots and the exact day Stuart discovered violence, to unfold the reasons why he changed from a happy-go-lucky little boy into a polydrug-addicted-alcoholic Jekyll and Hyde

personality. Funny, despairing, brilliantly written and full of surprises: this is the most original and moving biography of recent years. 304 pages

Migration Stories - 16 tales, penned by 16 accomplished writers, weave a tapestry of contemporary migration to the UK. As the globe shrinks, modern armed conflict, natural disasters and global economic imbalances have impacted on every nation of the world, including Britain. This anthology weaves a tapestry of these disparate voices, giving fictional and fictionalised voices to UK migrants of both recent times and the more distant past. 182 pages

Madeline Miller: The Song of Achilles - Greece in the age of heroes. Patroclus, an awkward young prince, has been exiled to the court of King Peleus. Here he is nobody, just another unwanted boy living in the shadow of King Peleus and his golden son, Achilles. Despite their differences, Achilles befriends the shamed prince, and as they grow into young men skilled in the arts of war and medicine, their bond blossoms into something deeper - despite the displeasure of Achilles's mother Thetis, a cruel sea goddess. But when word comes that Helen of Sparta has been kidnapped, Achilles must go to war in distant Troy and fulfil his destiny. Torn between love and fear for his friend, Patroclus goes with him, little knowing that the years that follow will test everything they hold dear. Profoundly moving and breathtakingly original, this rendering of the epic Trojan War is a dazzling feat of the imagination, a devastating love story, and an almighty battle between gods and kings, peace and glory, immortal fame and the human heart. 368 pages

Marion Moltena: Somewhere More Simple - A young teacher returns to the islands that captured her imagination in childhood where she becomes involved with Anna, a painter in her fifties who has cut herself off from her mainland past, and Hugh, drawn to the islands by a taste for self-reliance but now adrift. When a young girl disappears while on a school trip to the mainland all three are drawn into the mystery. 352 pages

Erin Morgenstern: The Night Circus - In 1886, a mysterious travelling circus becomes an international sensation. Open only at night, constructed entirely in black and white, Le Cirque des Rves delights all who wander its circular paths and warm themselves at its bonfire. Although there are acrobats, fortune-tellers and contortionists, the Circus of Dreams is no conventional spectacle. Some tents contain clouds, some ice. The circus seems almost to cast a spell over its aficionados, who call themselves the rveurs - the dreamers. At the heart of the story is the tangled relationship between two young magicians, Celia, the enchanter's daughter, and Marco, the sorcerer's apprentice. At the behest of their shadowy masters, they find themselves locked in a deadly contest, forced to test the very limits of the imagination, and of their love... A fabulous, fin-de-siccle feast for the senses and a life-affirming love story, The Night Circus is a captivating novel that will make the real world seem fantastical and a fantasy world real. 512 pages

Toni Morrison: Love - Short, earthy and shocking: a book about a good bad man, or a bad good one. The personal histories of the women in his life illuminate the Afro-American experience over the last 60 years. It's so rich that the blurb suggests two readings of it are needed, and a piece of wisdom can suddenly halt your progress, as "All over the world, traitors help progress. It's

like being exposed to tuberculosis.” Both style and content should provide much to discuss. 208 pages

Kate Mosse: The Winter Ghosts – The Great War took much more than lives. It robbed a generation of friends, lovers and futures. In Freddie Watson's case, it took his beloved brother and, at times, his peace of mind. Unable to cope with his grief, Freddie has spent much of the time since in a sanatorium. In the winter of 1928, still seeking resolution, Freddie is travelling through the French Pyrenees - another region that has seen too much bloodshed over the years. During a snowstorm, his car spins off the mountain road. Shaken, he stumbles into the woods, emerging by a tiny village. There he meets Fabrissa, a beautiful local woman, also mourning a lost generation. Over the course of one night, Fabrissa and Freddie share their stories of remembrance and loss. By the time dawn breaks, he will have stumbled across a tragic mystery that goes back through the centuries. By turns thrilling, poignant and haunting, this is a story of two lives touched by war and transformed by courage. 304 pages

Jojo Moyes: Me Before You - Lou Clark knows lots of things. She knows how many footsteps there are between the bus stop and home. She knows she likes working in The Buttered Bun tea shop and she knows she might not love her boyfriend Patrick. What Lou doesn't know is she's about to lose her job or that knowing what's coming is what keeps her sane. Will Traynor knows his motorcycle accident took away his desire to live. He knows everything feels very small and rather joyless now and he knows exactly how he's going to put a stop to that. What Will doesn't know is that Lou is about to burst into his world in a riot of colour. And neither of them knows they're going to change the other for all time. 512 pages

Jojo Moyes: The Girl You Left Behind - France, 1916. Sophie Lefevre must keep her family safe whilst her adored husband Edouard fights at the front. When she is ordered to serve the German officers who descend on her hotel each evening, her home becomes riven by fierce tensions. And from the moment the new Kommandant sets eyes on Sophie's portrait - painted by Edouard - a dangerous obsession is born, which will lead Sophie to make a dark and terrible decision. Almost a century later, and Sophie's portrait hangs in the home of Liv Halston, a wedding gift from her young husband before he died. A chance encounter reveals the painting's true worth, and its troubled history. In *The Girl You Left Behind* two young women, separated by a century, are united in their determination to fight for what they love most - whatever the cost. 544 pages

Alice Munro: Dear Life - Alice Munro captures the essence of life in this collection of stories. Moments of change, chance encounters, the twist of fate that leads a person to a new way of thinking or being: the stories in 'Dear Life' build to form a radiant, indelible portrait of just how dangerous and strange ordinary life can be. 336 pages

Preethi Nair: 100 shades of White - A magical mixture of East meets West, and mothers in conflict with daughters – for anyone who enjoyed 'Bend it like Beckham' but prefers food to football... There's East. There's West. And then there's Maya... 304 pages

Celeste Ng: Everything I Never Told You - Lydia is the favourite child of Marilyn and James. They are determined that Lydia will fulfil the dreams they

were unable to pursue - in Marilyn's case that her daughter become a doctor rather than a homemaker, in James's case that Lydia be popular at school, a girl with a busy social life and the centre of every party. But Lydia is under pressures that have nothing to do with growing up in 1970s small town Ohio. When Lydia's body is found in the local lake, James is consumed by guilt and sets out on a reckless path that may destroy his marriage. *Everything I Never Told You* is a gripping page-turner, about secrets, love, longing, lies and race. 304 pages

Maggie O'Farrell: *After You'd Gone* - A distraught young woman boards a train at King's Cross to return to her family in Scotland. Six hours later, she catches sight of something so terrible in a mirror at Waverley Station that she gets on the next train back to London. *After You'd Gone* follows Alice's mental journey through her own past, after a traffic accident has left her in a coma. A love story that is also a story of absence, and of how our choices can reverberate through the generations, it slowly draws us closer to a dark secret at the family's heart. 384 pages

R J Palacio: *Wonder* - *'My name is August. I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse.'* Auggie wants to be an ordinary ten-year-old. He does ordinary things - eating ice cream, playing on his Xbox. He feels ordinary - inside. But ordinary kids don't make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. Ordinary kids aren't stared at wherever they go. Born with a terrible facial abnormality, Auggie has been home-schooled by his parents his whole life. Now, for the first time, he's being sent to a real school - and he's dreading it. All he wants is to be accepted - but can he convince his new classmates that he's just like them, underneath it all? *Wonder* is a funny, frank, astonishingly moving debut to read in one sitting, pass on to others, and remember long after the final page. 316 pages

Orhan Pamuk: *The Black Book* – Galip is an Istanbul lawyer whose wife has vanished. Could she be hiding out with her brother? And if so, why isn't anyone in his flat? Playing the part of private investigator, Galip sleuth soon finds himself descending deeper and deeper into an extraordinary mystery. Richly atmospheric, *The Black Book* is a labyrinthine novel suffused with the sights, sounds and scents of contemporary Istanbul. 416 pages

Tony Parsons: *Man and Boy* – A bestseller from the popular journalist, famously a “new man”. Harry Silver's wife walks out on him when he is unfaithful, leaving him to cope with the care of their young son. He has to grow up and decide what love and family mean to him. 352 pages

Jodi Picoult: *The Storyteller* - Sage Singer has a past that makes her want to hide from the world. Sleeping by day and working in a bakery by night, she kneads her emotion into the beautiful bread she bakes. But when she strikes up an unlikely friendship with Josef Weber, a quiet man old enough to be her grandfather, and respected pillar of the community, she feels that finally, she may have found someone she can open up to. Until Josef tells her the evil secret he's kept for sixty years. Caught between Josef's search for redemption and her shattered illusions, Sage turns to her family history and her own life for answers. As she uncovers the truth from the darkest horrors of war, she must follow a twisting trail between betrayal and forgiveness, love and revenge. And

ask herself the most difficult question she has ever faced - can murder ever be justice? Or mercy? 464 pages

DBC Pierre: Vernon God Little – Winner of the Man Booker Prize 2003, “a twenty-first century comedy in the presence of death” is the perfect, concise description provided on the book cover. Vernon Gregory Little has secrets, but none of them - or so he assumes - have anything to do with the recent massacre of 16 students at his high school. This novel depicts simple humanity in a complex world and poses questions about culpability and priorities in a hypocritical, media-saturated world. 440 pages

Sylvia Plath: Ariel - The poems in Sylvia Plath's **Ariel**, including many of her best-known such as 'Lady Lazarus', 'Daddy' and 'Fever 103 degrees', were all written between the publication in 1960 of Plath's first book, **The Colossus**, and her death in 1963. 81 pages

Philip Pullman: Northern Lights – Winning numerous awards including the Guardian Children’s Fiction Award, the Carnegie Medal and the Children’s Book of the Year, this is the first book in the Dark Materials Trilogy. This highly acclaimed teenage trilogy is being widely read by adults, forming part of the newly branded “kid-ult” literature. Northern Lights begins this epic fantasy chronicling the otherworldly adventures of Lyra and her companions. 416 pages

Michael Punke: The Revenant - Blood Lost. Life Found. Hugh Glass isn’t afraid to die. He’s done it once already. Rocky Mountains, 1823 - when expert tracker Glass is viciously mauled by a bear, death seems inevitable. The two men ordered to remain with him until he dies flee, stripping him of his rifle and hatchet and leaving him to die alone. But soon a grim, horribly scarred figure is seen wandering, asking after two men, one with a gun that seems too good for him...The Revenant is a remarkable tale of obsession and the lengths that one man will go to for retribution. 320 pages

Michele Roberts: Reader, I Married Him – Thrice-widowed Aurora also known as Dawn goes to Italy to find herself and succeeds in getting embroiled with radical feminist nuns, dubious priests, smuggling and a certain amount of sex and shopping. But Aurora is not all she seems. Described by one reviewer as a ‘menopausal Bridget Jones’, this is a great read, a literary take on the chick-lit genre. 240 pages

Jennie Rooney – Red Joan - Cambridge University in 1937 is awash with ideas and idealists - to unworlly Joan it is dazzling. After a chance meeting with Russian-born Sonya and Leo, Joan is swept up in the glamour and energy of the duo, and finds herself growing closer and closer to them both. But allegiance is a slippery thing. Out of university and working in a government ministry with access to top-secret information, Joan finds her loyalty tested as she is faced with the most difficult question of all: what price would you pay to remain true to yourself? 400 pages

Salman Rushdie: The Satanic Verses - This Whitbread Prize winner continues to cause controversy. 560 pages

Sathnam Sanghera: Marriage Material - To Arjan Banga, returning to the Black Country after the unexpected death of his father, his family's corner shop represents everything he has tried to leave behind – a lethargic pace of life, insular rituals and ways of thinking. But when his mother insists on keeping the shop open, he finds himself being dragged back, forced into big decisions about his imminent marriage back in London and uncovering the history of his broken family – the elopement and mixed-race marriage of his aunt Surinder, the betrayals and loyalties, loves and regrets that have played out in the shop over more than fifty years. Taking inspiration from Arnold Bennett's classic novel *The Old Wives' Tale*, *Marriage Material* tells the story of three generations of a family through the prism of a Wolverhampton corner shop. This is an epic tale of family, love, and politics, spanning the second half of the twentieth century, and the start of the twenty-first. Told with humour, tenderness and insight, it manages to be both a unique and urgent survey of modern Britain by one of Britain's most promising young writers, and an ingenious reimagining of a classic work of fiction. 320 pages

Marjane Satrapi: Persepolis (Graphic novel) - The story of a childhood, and the story of a return. The intelligent and outspoken child of radical Marxists, and the great-granddaughter of Iran's last emperor, Satrapi 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. This is a beautiful and intimate story full of tragedy and humour - raw, honest and incredibly illuminating. 352 pages

Bernard Schlink: The Reader - This short novel by a professor of law at Berlin University, the author of several thrillers, is surprisingly affecting. In it, a schoolboy in post-war Germany has an affair with an older woman, who disappears. They meet again when she is a defendant in a war crimes trial. 224 pages

Robert Seethaler: A Whole Life - Andreas lives his whole life in the Austrian Alps, where he arrives as a young boy taken in by a farming family. He is a man of very few words and so, when he falls in love with Marie, he doesn't ask for her hand in marriage, but instead has some of his friends light her name at dusk across the mountain. When Marie dies in an avalanche, pregnant with their first child, Andreas' heart is broken. He leaves his valley just once more, to fight in WWII - where he is taken prisoner in the Caucasus - and returns to find that modernity has reached his remote haven . . . Like John Williams' *Stoner* or Denis Johnson's *Train Dreams*, *A Whole Life* by Robert Seethaler is a tender book about finding dignity and beauty in solitude. An exquisite novel about a simple life. 160 pages

Asne Seierstad: The Bookseller of Kabul - Seierstad, an award winning journalist has developed a fascinating portrait of the life of a family in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban. This rich story is based on real events observed during her stay with the bookseller and his family. The narrative is concerned with everyday occurrences in family life set against a backdrop of political change. 288 pages

Will Self: The Book of Dave - London cabbie Dave Rudman writes a book to his estranged son to give him some fatherly advice? Hundreds of years later, when rising sea levels have put London underwater, the discovery of the Book of Dave spawns a religion. Shuttling between the recent past and a far-off

future where England is terribly altered, *The Book of Dave* is a troubling mirror held up to our times: disturbing, satirizing and vilifying who and what we think we are. 512 pages

Qaisra Shahraz: The Holy Woman – Set in contemporary Pakistan, London and Egypt. Zarrie Bano is a glamorous 28 year-old daughter of a wealthy Muslim landowner who falls in love with a business tycoon and plans to marry him. Her father takes an instant irrational dislike to her choice and vetoes the match and when his only son is killed in a freak riding accident, decides to make Zarri his heiress, resurrecting an ancient tradition which decrees that an heiress must remain celibate. 354 pages

Kamila Shamsie: Burnt Shadows - August 9th, 1945, Nagasaki. Hiroko Tanaka steps out onto her veranda, taking in the view of the terraced slopes leading up to the sky. In a split second, the world turns white. In the next, it explodes with the sound of fire and the horror of realisation. In the numbing aftermath of a bomb that obliterates everything she has known, all that remains are the bird-shaped burns on her back, an indelible reminder of the world she has lost. Sweeping in its scope and mesmerising in its evocation of time and place, *Burnt Shadows* is an epic narrative of disasters evaded and confronted, loyalties offered and repaid, and loves rewarded and betrayed. 384 pages

James Shapiro: 1599: a year in the life of William Shakespeare – How did Shakespeare go from being a talented poet and playwright to become one of the greatest writers who ever lived? In this one exhilarating year, we follow what he reads and writes, what he saw, and who he worked with as he invests in the new Globe theatre and creates four of his most famous plays. 464 pages

Carol Shields: Unless - On one level, this is a story about a successful forty-something woman trying to come to terms with why her grown up daughter has become a beggar on the streets of Toronto. It is, however, much more. The story is engaging right from the start, and through the main character, Reta, the reader is faced with the themes of goodness, nature of power, family life and, perhaps unfashionably, the place of women in society. An excellent read with lots of ideas to talk about. 336 pages

Lola Shoneyin: The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives - To the dismay of her overbearingly ambitious mother, Bolanle marries into a polygamous family, where she is the fourth wife of a rich, rotund patriarch, Baba Segi. She is a graduate and therefore a great prize, but even graduates must produce children and her husband's persistent bellyache is a sign that things are not as they should be. So Baba takes her to hospital trying to discover the cause of her barrenness. Weaving the voices of Baba Segi and his four competing wives into a portrait of a clamorous household of twelve, Shoneyin evokes an extraordinary Nigerian family in a riotous domestic African novel about rivalry, secrets and jealous wives. 256 pages

Craig Silvey: Jasper Jones – Jasper Jones has come to my window. I don't know why, but he has. Maybe he's in trouble. Maybe he doesn't have anywhere else to go. Late on a hot summer night at the tail end of 1965, Charlie Bucktin, a precocious and bookish boy of thirteen, is startled by a knock on his window. His visitor is Jasper Jones. Rebellious, mixed-race and solitary, Jasper

is a distant figure of danger and intrigue for Charlie. So when Jasper begs for his help, Charlie eagerly steals into the night by his side, terribly afraid but desperate to impress. Jasper takes him to his secret glade in the bush, and it is here that Charlie bears witness to a horrible discovery. In this simmering summer where everything changes, Charlie learns to discern the truth from the myth. By turns heartbreaking, hilarious, tender and wise. 304 pages

Rachel Simon: The Story of Beautiful Girl - On a stormy night in small-town America, a couple, desperate and soaked to the skin, knock on a stranger's door. When Martha, a retired schoolteacher, answers their knock, her world changes for ever. Her visitors are Linnie and Homan, who have fled The School for the Incurable and Feebleminded with their newborn baby. But the police are closing in and their freedom is about to be snatched away. Moments before she is taken back to the School, bound and tied, Linnie utters two words to Martha: 'Hide her.' And so begins the heart-rending story of Linnie, Homan, Martha and baby Julia - lives divided by seemingly insurmountable obstacles, but drawn together by a secret pact and extraordinary love. 352 pages

Graeme C Simsion – The Rosie Project - Meet Don Tillman. Don is getting married. He just doesn't know who to yet. But he has designed a very detailed questionnaire to help him find the perfect woman. One thing he already knows, though, is that it's not Rosie. Absolutely, completely, definitely not. Telling the story of Rosie and Don, Graeme Simsion's The Rosie Project is an international phenomenon, sold in over thirty countries - and counting. Don Tillman is a socially challenged genetics professor who's decided the time has come to find a wife. His questionnaire is intended to weed out anyone who's unsuitable. The trouble is, Don has rather high standards and doesn't really do flexible so, despite lots of takers - he looks like Gregory Peck. Sometimes, though, you don't find love: love finds you. 368 pages

Rebecca Skloot: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks - Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. Born a poor black tobacco farmer, her cancer cells -- taken without her knowledge -- became a multimillion-dollar industry and one of the most important tools in medicine. Yet Henrietta's family did not learn of her 'immortality' until more than twenty years after her death, with devastating consequences. Balancing the beauty and drama of scientific discovery with dark questions about who owns the stuff our bodies are made of, The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks is an extraordinary journey in search of the soul and story of a real woman, whose cells live on today in all four corners of the world. 384 pages

Ali Smith: Public Library and Other Stories - Why are books so very powerful? What do the books we've read over our lives - our own personal libraries - make of us? What does the unravelling of our tradition of public libraries, so hard-won but now in jeopardy, say about us? The stories in Ali Smith's new collection are about what we do with books and what they do with us: how they travel with us; how they shock us, change us, challenge us, banish time while making us older, wiser and ageless all at once; how they remind us to pay attention to the world we make. 240 pages

Cath Staincliffe: Witness - Four bystanders in the wrong place at the wrong time. Witnesses to the shocking shooting of a teenage boy. A moment that changes their lives forever. Fiona, a midwife, is plagued by panic attacks and unable to work. Has she the strength to testify? Mike, a delivery driver and family man, faces an impossible decision when his frightened wife forces him to choose - us or the court case. Cheryl, a single-mother, doesn't want her child to grow up in the same climate of fear. Dare she speak out and risk her own life? Zak, a homeless man, offers to talk in exchange for witness protection and the chance of a new start. Ordinary people in an extraordinary situation. Will the witnesses stand firm or be prevented from giving evidence? How will they cope with the emotional trauma of reliving the murder under pitiless cross-examination? A compassionate, suspenseful and illuminating story exploring the real human cost of bearing witness. 340 pages

M.L.Stedman - The Light Between Oceans - Would you accept a chance for happiness even if it wasn't yours to have? Tom Sherbourne, released from the horrors of the First World War, is now a lighthouse keeper, cocooned on a remote island with his young wife Izzy, who is content in everything but her failure to have a child. One April morning, a boat washes ashore carrying a dead man - and a crying baby. Safe from the real world, Tom and Izzy break the rules and follow their hearts. It is a decision with devastating consequences. It's a story about right and wrong, and how sometimes they look the same. 464 pages

Kathryn Stockett: The Help - Enter a vanished and unjust world: Jackson, Mississippi, 1962. Where black maids raise white children but aren't trusted not to steal the silver... There's Aibileen, raising her seventeenth white child and nursing the hurt caused by her own son's tragic death; Minny, who's cooking is nearly as sassy as her tongue; and white Miss Skeeter, home from College, who wants to know why her beloved maid has disappeared. Skeeter, Aibileen and Minny. No one would believe they'd be friends; fewer still would tolerate it. But as each woman finds the courage to cross boundaries, they come to depend and rely upon one another. Each is in search of a truth. And together they have an extraordinary story to tell... 464 pages

Julie Summers: Jambusters –The compelling true story that inspired the ITV drama series *Home Fires*. The Second World War was arguably the WI's finest hour. The whole of its previous history - educating, entertaining and supporting women and campaigning on women's issues - culminated in the enormous collective responsibility felt by the members to 'do their bit' for Britain. A third of a million country women set out to make their lives and the lives of those around them, more bearable in what they described as 'a period of insanity'. Through archive material and interviews, Julie Summers takes us behind the scenes, revealing their nitty-gritty approach to the daily problems presented by the conflict. Jambusters is the fascinating story of how the Women's Institute pulled rural Britain through the war with pots of jam and a spirit of make-do-and-mend. 333 pages.

Haley Tanner: Vaclav & Lena – Vaclav and Lena seem destined for each other. They first meet as children in an English-as-a-second- language class in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn. Vaclav, who dreams of becoming a famous magician, is precocious and verbal. Lena, struggling with English, takes

comfort in the safety of his adoration, his noisy, loving home, and the care of Rasia, his big-hearted mother. Vaclav imagines their story unfolding like a fairy tale, but among the many truths to be discovered in Haley Tanner's wondrous debut is that happily ever after is never a foregone conclusion. When Lena is not around Vaclav and his parents, her world is unsafe. Her poor language skills isolate her. She lives with a mostly absent, neglectful aunt, and has no connection to her parents, who she believes are still in Russia. Then, one day, Lena does not show up for school. She has disappeared from Vaclav and his family's lives as if by a cruel trick. For the next seven years Vaclav always says goodnight to her, wondering if she is doing the same somewhere. On the eve of Lena's seventeenth birthday he finds out. Haley Tanner has the originality and verve of a born storyteller, and the boldness to imagine a world in which love can overcome the most difficult circumstances. In *Vaclav & Lena* she has created two unforgettable young protagonists who evoke the joy, the confusion, and the passion of having a profound, everlasting connection with someone else. 306 pages

Rose Tremain: Restoration - When a twist of fate delivers an ambitious young medical student to the court of King Charles II, he is suddenly thrust into a vibrant world of luxury and opulence. Blessed with a quick wit and sparkling charm, Robert Merivel rises quickly, finding favour with the King, and gaining a privileged position as 'paper groom' to the youngest of the King's mistresses. But by falling in love with her, Merivel transgresses the one rule that will cast him out from his new-found paradise. Determined to be restored to the King's grace, Merivel begins a journey of self-knowledge, and discovers that the King's pleasure is equally matched by his wrath. 416 pages

Robert Tressell: The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists – A classic representation of the impoverished and politically powerless underclass of British society in Edwardian England. ruthlessly exploited by the institutionalised corruption of their employers, and the civic and religious authorities. Epic in scale, it is a timeless work whose political message is as relevant today as it was in Tressell's time. For this it has long been honoured by the Trade Union movement, and across the political spectrum. 609 pages

William Trevor: After Rain – Less is most definitely more in the case of this author. Trevor is a master in the art of short story writing, and here is a collection of twelve stories, mostly set in Ireland, that say so much in so few words. 224 pages

Jonathan Trigell: Boy A – Jack is an institutionalised young man, innocent to the world, yet guilty of a monstrous childhood crime. This novel captures Jack's bewilderment & exhilaration as he approaches adulthood in his new world & the effect on him & those around him. 256 pages

Leonid Tsypkin: Summer in Baden-Baden - One bitterly cold winter in the 1970s, Leonid Tsypkin's obsession with Dostoyevsky leads him to Leningrad by train, so that he can see for himself where his hero died. As the train makes its way across Russia, a journal inspires Tsypkin to conjure up the summer of 1867, when Dostoyevsky and his young wife Anna travelled across Europe to Baden-Baden. This elegy to the great Russian writer becomes a glorious and unforgettable love story. 320 pages

Nancy Turner: These is my words - Inspired by stories of her great-grandmother who retired from running a cattle ranch at the age of 85, Nancy Turner's debut novel tells the story of Sarah Prine, pioneer woman and settler of America's western frontier. Sarah begins her diary in 1881, when at the age of 18 her family begins their arduous journey from the dry, dusty heat of Arizona to the greener pastures of Texas. The wagon trail meets danger at every step; rattlesnakes and Indian attacks rip out the heart of Sarah's world. Yet she proves herself strong and faithful, and in times of greatest trouble her family turn to her for support--both physical and emotional. 384 pages

Kurt Vonnegut: Cat's Cradle – Told with deadpan humour and bitter irony, Kurt Vonnegut's cult tale of global destruction preys on our deepest fears of witnessing Armageddon and worse still, surviving it. Dr Felix Hoenikker, one of the founding fathers of the atomic bomb, has left a deadly legacy to the world; 'ice-nine', a lethal chemical capable of freezing the entire planet. The search for it's whereabouts leads to Hoenikker's three eccentric children, to a crazed dictator in the Caribbean, to madness. Felix Hoenikker's Death Wish comes true when his latest, fatal gift to mankind brings about the end, that for all of us, is nigh. 224 pages

Alice Walker: The Color Purple - Set in the deep American south between the wars, this is the classic tale of Celie, a young poor black girl. Raped repeatedly by her father, she loses two children and then is married off to a man who treats her no better than a slave. She is separated from her sister Nettie and dreams of becoming like the glamorous Shug Avery, a singer and rebellious black woman who has taken charge of her own destiny. Gradually Celie discovers the support of women that enables her to leave the past behind and begin a new life. 272 pages

Martin Walker: The Dying Season

The Dordogne town of St Denis may be picturesque and sleepy, but it has more than its fair share of mysteries. When Bruno, Chief of Police is invited to the ninetieth birthday party of a powerful local patriarch - a war hero with high-level political connections in France, Russia and Israel - he encounters a family hiding many secrets. When one of the other guests is found dead the next morning and the family try to cover it up, Bruno knows it's his duty to prevent the victim from becoming just another skeleton in their closet. Even if his digging reveals things Bruno himself would rather keep buried. 352 pages

Sarah Waters: Fingersmith - Winner of the Crime Writers' Association Ellis Peters Historical Dagger this is Waters' third offering of Victorian crime inspired by Sheridan Le Fanu and Wilkie Collins with a cast of orphans, villains, pickpockets and lunatics. 560 pages

Sarah Waters: The Little Stranger - In a dusty post-war summer in rural Warwickshire, a doctor is called to a patient at Lonely Hundreds Hall. Home to the Ayres family for over two centuries, the Georgian house, once grand and handsome, is now in decline, its masonry crumbling, its gardens choked with weeds, its owners struggling to keep pace. But are the Ayreses haunted by something more sinister than a dying way of life? Little does Dr Faraday know how closely, and how terrifyingly, their story is about to become entwined with his. 512 pages

S J Watson: Before I Go the Sleep - Memories define us. So what if you lost yours every time you went to sleep? Your name, your identity, your past, even the people you love - all forgotten overnight. And the one person you trust may only be telling you half the story. Welcome to Christine's life. 384 pages

Andy Weir: The Martian

I'm stranded on Mars. I have no way to communicate with Earth. I'm in a Habitat designed to last 31 days. If the Oxygenator breaks down, I'll suffocate. If the Water Reclaimer breaks down, I'll die of thirst. If the Habitat breaches, I'll just kind of explode. If none of those things happen, I'll eventually run out of food and starve to death. So yeah, I'm screwed. 384 pages

Kate Williams: Becoming Queen – Combining novelistic flair with historical accuracy, Williams, author of the acclaimed *England's Mistress*, relates how the death of Princess Charlotte impacted the reign of Queen Victoria, who became Queen aged 13. Determined to take control of her own destiny, she clashed with mother, protégé and comptroller. Even during her reign, her ministers, including Prince Albert, still tried to steal power from her. With tales of secrets, sexual repression and endless conflict, this is an intimate portrait of Britain's longest reigning monarch. 414 pages

Robert Wilson: Stealing People - London, January 2014. In the space of 32 hours, in a well-planned and highly organised operation, six billionaires' children are taken off the streets in a series of slickly well-executed kidnaps. The gang demands 25 million per hostage for 'expenses' - not ransom. And when your child goes missing, you need Charles Boxer: a man with little left to lose who'll stop at nothing to save the families' suffering. 384 pages

Jeanette Winterson: Why be Happy when You Could be Normal? In 1985 Jeanette Winterson's first novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, was published. It was Jeanette's version of the story of a terraced house in Accrington, an adopted child, and the thwarted giantess Mrs Winterson. It was a cover story, a painful past written over and repainted. It was a story of survival. This book is that story's the silent twin. It is full of hurt and humour and a fierce love of life. It is about the pursuit of happiness, about lessons in love, the search for a mother and a journey into madness and out again. It is generous, honest and true. 240 pages

PG Wodehouse mixed set: Carry on Jeeves / The Code of the Woosters

Carry on Jeeves: A classic collection of Jeeves and Wooster stories from P.G. Wodehouse, the great comic writer of the 20th century. In his new role as valet to Bertie Wooster, Jeeves's first duty is to create a miracle hangover cure. From that moment, the partnership that is Jeeves and Wooster never looks back. 288 pages

The Code of the Woosters: A classic Jeeves and Wooster novel. Purloining an antique cow creamer under the instruction of the indomitable Aunt Dahlia is the least of Bertie's tasks, for he has to play Cupid while feuding with Spode. 304 pages

Themed Sets

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