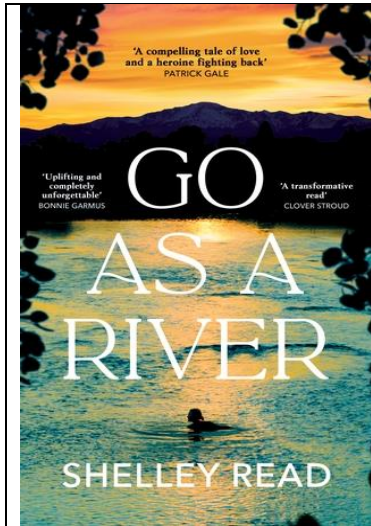


Book Club Titles Q-Z

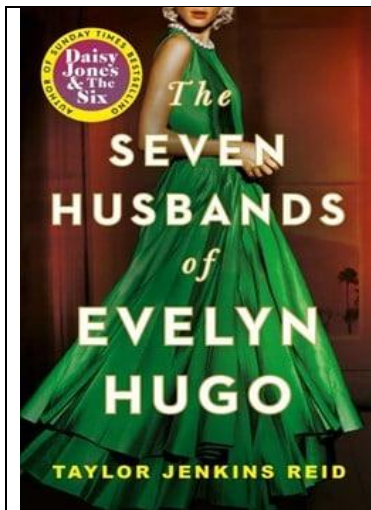


Read, Shelley
Go as a River (2023)

On a cool autumn day in 1948, Victoria Nash delivers late-season peaches from her family's farm set amid the wild beauty of Colorado. As she heads into her village, a dishevelled stranger stops to ask her the way. How she chooses to answer will unknowingly alter the course of both their young lives.

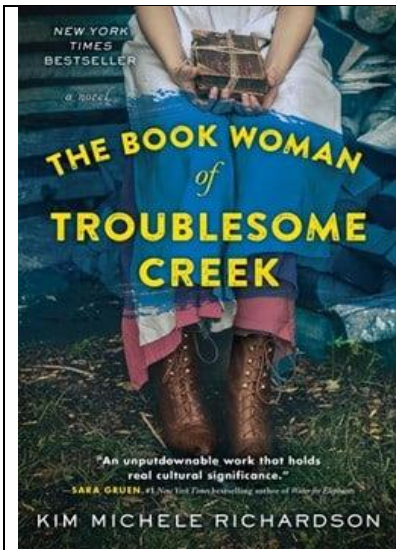
So begins the mesmerizing story of split-second choices and courageous acts that propel Victoria away from the only home she has ever known and towards a reckoning with loss, hope and her own untapped strength.

Gathering all the pieces of her small and extraordinary existence, spinning through the eddies of desire, heartbreak and betrayal, she will arrive at a single rocky decision that will change her life forever.



Reid, Taylor Jenkins
The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo (2017)

Aging and reclusive Hollywood movie icon Evelyn Hugo is finally ready to tell the truth about her glamorous and scandalous life. But when she chooses unknown magazine reporter Monique Grant for the job, no one is more astounded than Monique herself. Why her? Why now? Monique is not exactly on top of the world. Her husband has left her, and her professional life is going nowhere. Regardless of why Evelyn has selected her to write her biography, Monique is determined to use this opportunity to jumpstart her career. Summoned to Evelyn's luxurious apartment, Monique listens in fascination as the actress tells her story. From making her way to Los Angeles in the 1950s to her decision to leave show business in the '80s, and, of course, the seven husbands along the way, Evelyn unspools a tale of ruthless ambition, unexpected friendship, and a great forbidden love. Monique begins to feel a very real connection to the legendary star, but as Evelyn's story near its conclusion, it becomes clear that her life intersects with Monique's own in tragic and irreversible ways.



Richardson, Kim Michelle
The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek (2019)

The bestselling historical fiction novel from Kim Michele Richardson, this is a novel following Cussy Mary, a packhorse librarian and her quest to bring books to the Appalachian community she loves, perfect for readers of William Kent Kreuger and Lisa Wingate. The perfect addition to your next book club!

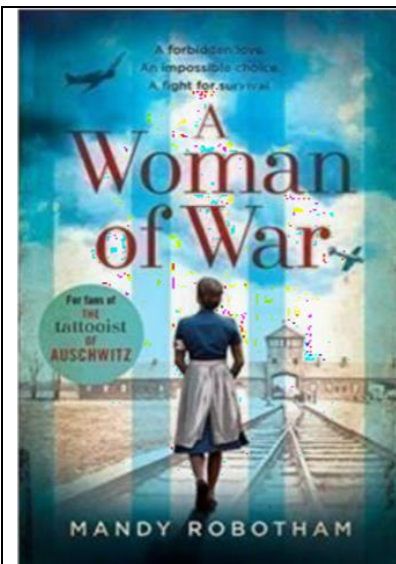
The hardscrabble folks of Troublesome Creek have to scarp for everything-everything except books, that is. Thanks to Roosevelt's Kentucky Pack Horse Library Project, Troublesome's got its very own traveling librarian, Cussy Mary Carter.

Cussy's not only a book woman, however, she's also the last of her kind, her skin a shade of blue unlike most anyone else. Not everyone is keen on Cussy's family or the Library Project, and a Blue is often blamed for any whiff of trouble. If Cussy wants to bring the joy of books to the hill folks, she's going to have to confront prejudice as old as the Appalachias and suspicion as deep as the holler.



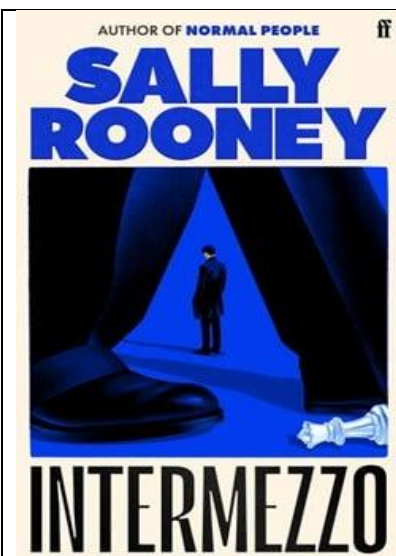
Riordan, Kate
The Stranger (2018)

Cornwall, 1940. In the hushed hours of deepest night, a young woman is found washed up on the rocks. Was it a tragic accident? Or should the residents of Penhallow have been more careful about whom they invited in? In the midst of war three women arrive seeking safety at Penhallow Hall. Each is looking to escape her past. But one of them is not there by choice. As the threat of invasion mounts and the nightly blackouts feel longer and longer, tensions between the close-knit residents rise until dark secrets start to surface. And no one can predict what their neighbour is capable of . . . In a house full of strangers, who do you trust?



Robotham, Mandy
A Woman of War (2018)

For readers of *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* and Kate Furnivall comes a gritty tale of courage, betrayal and love in the most unlikely of places. Germany, 1944. Taken from the camps to serve the Führer himself, Anke Hoff is assigned as midwife to one of Hitler’s inner circles. If she refuses, her family will die. Torn between her duty as a caregiver and her hatred for the Nazi regime, Anke is swept into a life unlike anything she’s ever known – and she discovers that many of those at the Berghof are just as trapped as she is. And soon, she’s falling for a man who will make her world more complicated still...



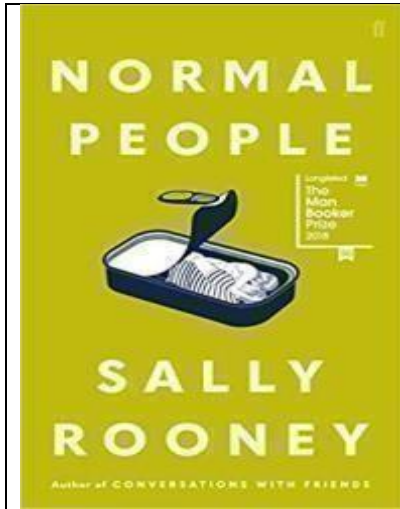
Rooney, Sally
Intermezzo (2024)

Though they are brothers, Peter and Ivan Koubek seem to have little in common. Peter, a Dublin lawyer in his thirties, is successful, competent, and seemingly unassailable. But after their father’s death, he finds himself struggling to manage his relationships—torn between Sylvia, his steadfast first love, and Naomi, a carefree college student.

Meanwhile, Ivan, a 22-year-old competitive chess player, considers himself a loner, the opposite of his confident older brother.

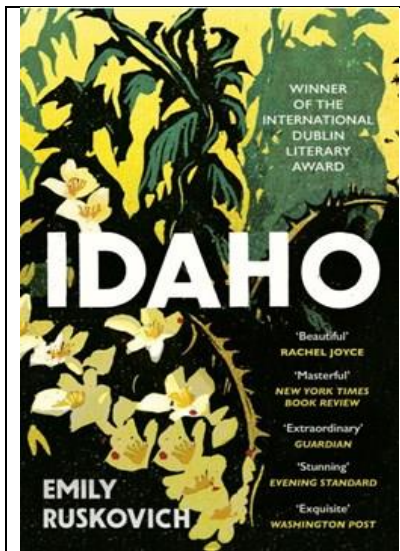
Yet, in the wake of their shared loss, he forms an intense connection with Margaret, an older woman also emerging from a turbulent past.

Intermezzo by Sally Rooney delves into the lives of two grieving brothers as they navigate a fragile period of desire, despair, and possibility—a chance to see how much life can hold without breaking.



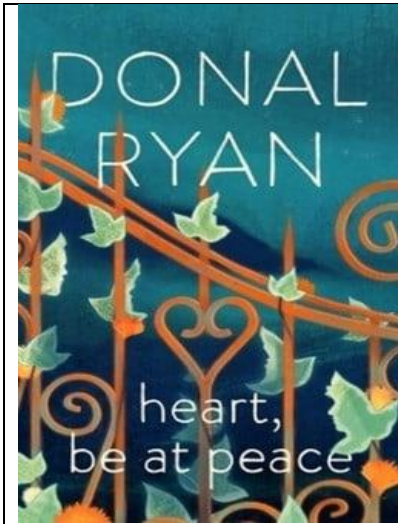
Rooney, Sally
Normal People (2018)

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.



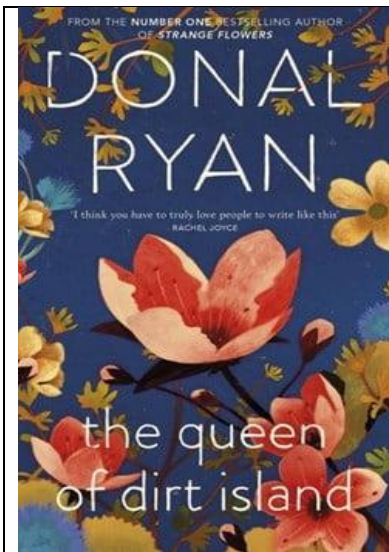
Ruskovitch, Emily
Idaho (2017)

Winner of the International Dublin Literary Award One hot August day a family drives to a mountain clearing to collect birch wood. Jenny, the mother, is in charge of lopping any small limbs off the logs with a hatchet. Wade, the father, does the stacking. The two daughters, June and May, aged nine and six, drink lemonade, swat away horseflies, bicker, sing snatches of songs as they while away the time. But then something unimaginably shocking happens, an act so extreme it will scatter the family in every different direction. Longlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize



Ryan, Donal
Heart, Be at Peace (2024)

Some things can send a heart spinning; others will crack it in two... In a small town in rural Ireland, the local people have weathered the storms of economic collapse and are looking towards the future. The jobs are back, the dramas of the past seemingly lulled, and although the town bears the marks of its history, new stories are unfolding. But a fresh menace is creeping around the lakeshore and the lanes of the town, and the peace of the community is about to be shattered in an unimaginable way. Young people are being drawn towards the promise of fast money whilst the generation above them tries to push back the tide of an enemy no one can touch. Told in twenty-one voices, Heart, be at Peace is a heartfelt, lyrical novel that can be read independently, or as a companion to Donal Ryan's multi-award-winning novel, The Spinning Heart.

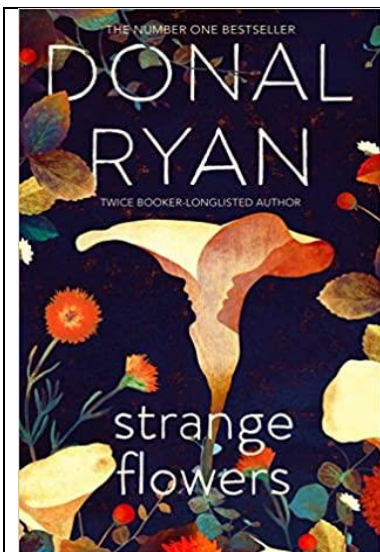


Ryan, Donal
The Queen of Dirt Island (2022)

The Aylward women are mad about each other, but you wouldn't always think it. You'd have to know them to know - in spite of what the neighbours might say about raised voices and dramatic scenes - that their house is a place of peace, filled with love, a refuge from the sadness and cruelty of the world.

Their story begins at an end and ends at a beginning. It's a story of terrible betrayals and fierce loyalties, of isolation and togetherness, of transgression, forgiveness, desire, and love.

About all the things family can be and all the things it sometimes isn't. More than anything, it is an uplifting celebration of fierce, loyal love and the powerful stories that last generations.



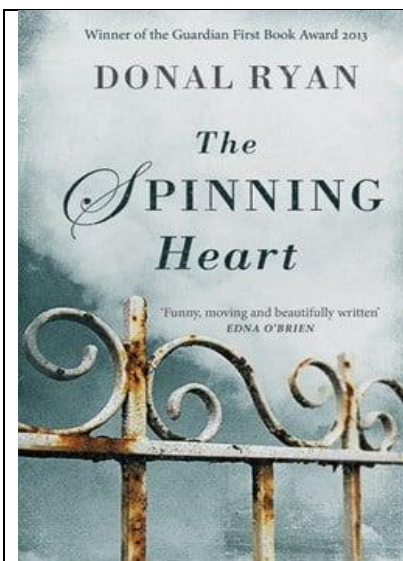
Ryan, Donal
Strange Flowers (2020)

In 1973, twenty-year-old Moll Gladney takes a morning bus from her rural home and disappears.

Bewildered and distraught, Paddy and Kit must confront an unbearable prospect: that they will never see their daughter again.

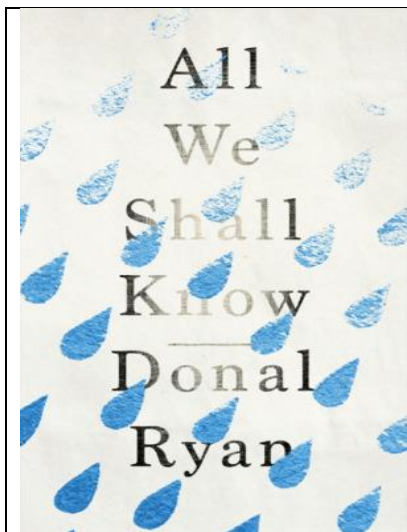
Five years later, Moll returns. What - and who - she brings with her will change the course of her family's life forever.

Beautiful and devastating, this exploration of loss, alienation and the redemptive power of love reaffirms Donal Ryan as one of the most talented and empathetic writers at work today.



Ryan, Donal
The Spinning Heart (2012)

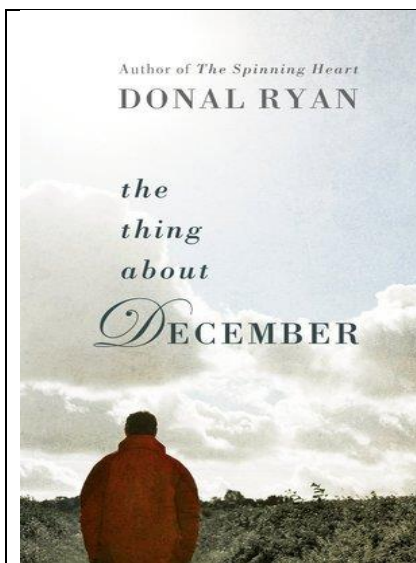
In the aftermath of Ireland's financial collapse, dangerous tensions surface in an Irish town. As violence flares, the characters face a battle between public persona and inner desires. Through a chorus of unique voices, each struggling to tell their own kind of truth, a single authentic tale unfolds. The Spinning Heart speaks for contemporary Ireland like no other novel. Wry, vulnerable, all-too human, it captures the language and spirit of rural Ireland and with uncanny perception articulates the words and thoughts of a generation.



Ryan, Donal
All We Shall Know (2016)

Melody Shee is alone and in trouble. Her husband doesn't take her news too well. She doesn't want to tell her father yet because he's a good man and this could break him. She's trying to stay in the moment, but the future is looming – larger by the day – while the past won't let her go. What she did to Breedie Flynn all those years ago still haunts her.

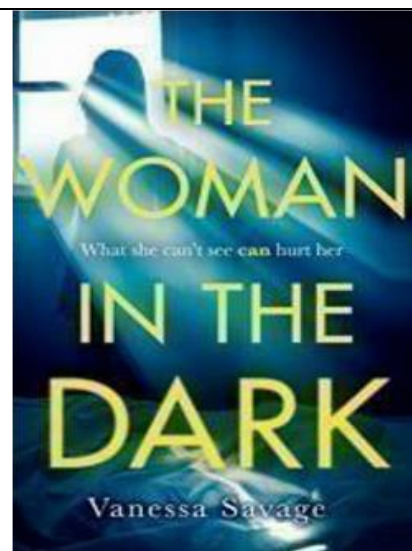
It's a good thing that she meets Mary Crothery when she does. Mary is a young Traveller woman, and she knows more about Melody than she lets on. She might just save Melody's life.



Ryan, Donal
The Thing About December (2013)

While the Celtic Tiger rages, and greed becomes the norm, Johnsey Cunliffe desperately tries to hold on to the familiar, even as he loses those who all his life have protected him from a harsh world. Village bullies and scheming land-grabbers stand in his way, no matter where he turns.

Set over the course of one year of Johnsey's life, *The Thing About December* breathes with his grief, bewilderment, humour and agonizing self-doubt. This is a heart-twisting tale of a lonely man struggling to make sense of a world moving faster than he is.



Savage, Vanessa
The Woman in the Dark (2019)

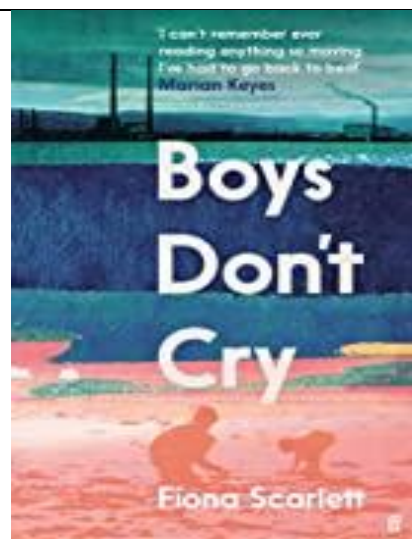
There's a stranger in the house...

But what if the stranger is your husband?

For Sarah and Patrick, life has always been easy. Then they move to Patrick's childhood home and everything changes.

Fifteen years ago, another family was murdered there. Patrick says they can make it perfect again, but their children are plagued by nightmares and Sarah swears someone is watching the house.

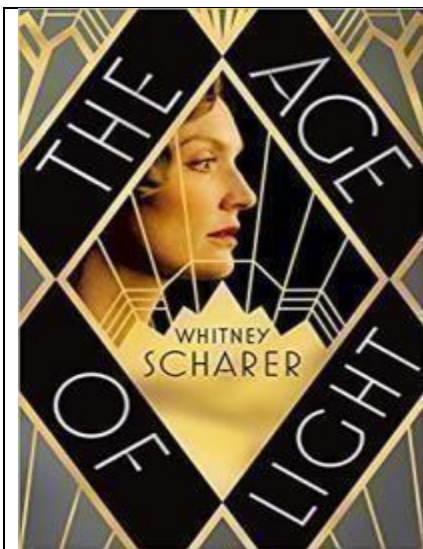
Worse still, the longer they live in their 'dream' home, the more different her loving husband becomes...



Scarlett, Fiona
Boys Don't Cry (2021)

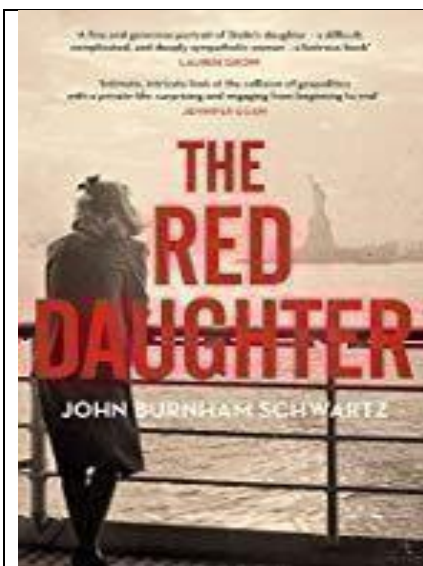
Joe is 17, a gifted artist and a brilliant older brother to 12-year-old Finn. They live with their Ma and Da in a Dublin tower block called Bojaxhiu or 'the Jax'. It's not an easy place to be a kid, especially when your father, Frank, is the muscle for the notorious gang leader Dessie 'The Badger' Murphy. But whether it's daytrips to the beach or drawing secret sketches, Joe works hard to show Finn life beyond the battered concrete yard below their flat.

Joe is determined not to become like his Da. But when Finn falls ill, Joe finds his convictions harder to cling to. With his father now in prison, his mother submerged in her grief, and his relationships with friends and classmates crumbling, Joe has to figure out how to survive without becoming what the world around him expects him to be.



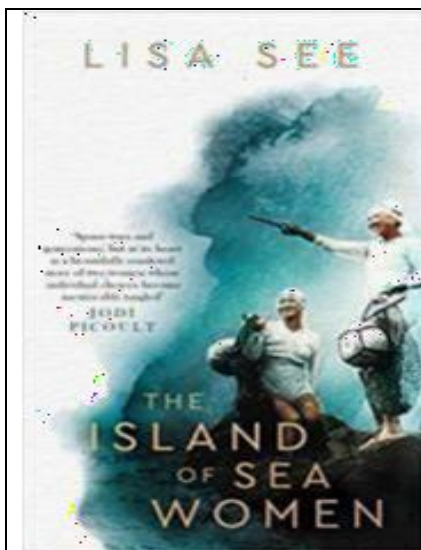
Scharer, Whitney
The Age of Light (2019)

'A startlingly modern love story and a mesmerizing portrait of a woman's self-transformation from muse into artist.' Celest Ng, author of Little Fires Everywhere Model. Muse. Lover. Artist. 'I'd rather take a picture than be one,' Lee Miller declares, as she arrives in Paris one cool day in 1929. Lee has left behind her life in New York and a successful modelling career at Vogue to pursue her dream of becoming a photographer. She soon catches the eye of renowned Surrealist artist Man Ray and convinces him to hire her as his assistant. Man is an egotistical, charismatic force, and as Lee becomes both his muse and his protégé, they embark upon a passionate affair.



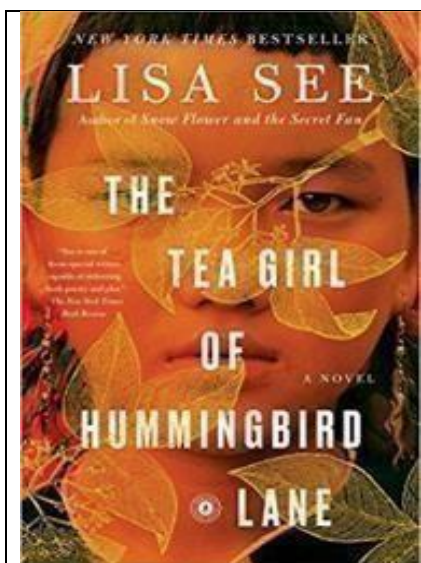
Schwartz, John Burnham
The Red Daughter (2019)

In one of the most momentous events of the Cold War, Svetlana Alliluyeva, the only daughter of the Soviet despot Joseph Stalin, abruptly abandoned her life in Moscow in 1967, arriving in New York to throngs of reporters and a nation hungry to hear her story. By her side is Peter Horvath, a young lawyer sent by the CIA to smuggle Svetlana into America. She is a contradictory celebrity: charismatic and headstrong, lonely and haunted, excited and alienated by her adopted country's radically different society. Persuading herself that all she yearns for is a simple American life, she attempts to settle into a suburban existence in New Jersey. But when this dream ends in disillusionment, Svetlana reaches out to Peter, the one person who understands how the chains of her past still hold her prisoner. As their relationship changes and deepens, unfolding under the eyes of her CIA minders, Svetlana's and Peter's private lives cease to be their own. John Burnham Schwartz's father was in fact the young lawyer who escorted Svetlana to the US.



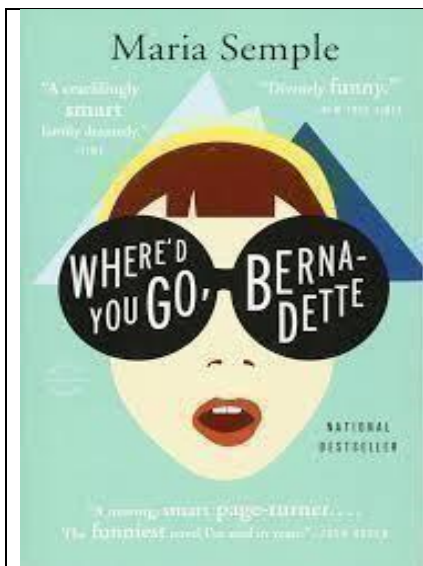
See, Lisa
The Island of Sea Women (2019)

The Island of Sea Women is an epic set over many decades, beginning during a period of Japanese colonialism in the 1930s and 1940s, followed by World War II, the Korean War and its aftermath, through the era of cell phones and wetsuits for the women divers. Throughout this time, the residents of Jeju find themselves caught between warring empires. Mi-ja is the daughter of a Japanese collaborator, and she will forever be marked by this association. Young-sook was born into a long line of haenyeo and will inherit her mother's position leading the divers in their village. Little do the two friends know that after surviving hundreds of dives and developing the closest of bonds, forces outside their control will push their friendship to the breaking point.



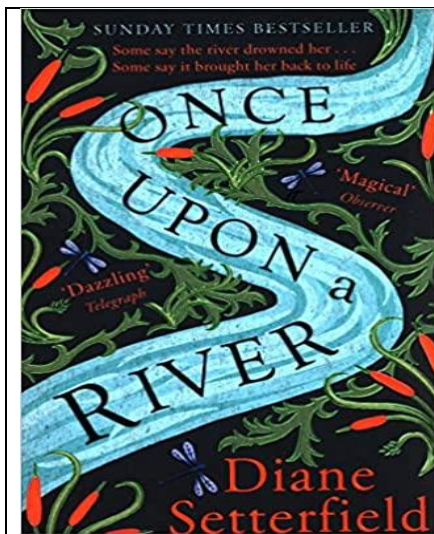
See, Lisa
The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane (2017)

A moving novel about tradition, tea farming, and the bonds between mothers and daughters. A stranger appears at the village gate in a jeep, the first automobile any of the villagers has ever seen. The stranger's arrival marks the first entrance of the modern world in the lives of the Akha people. Slowly, Li-yan, one of the few educated girls on her mountain, begins to reject the customs that shaped her early life. When she has a baby out of wedlock—conceived with a man her parents consider a poor choice—she rejects the tradition that would compel her to give the child over to be killed, and instead leaves her, wrapped in a blanket with a tea cake tucked in its folds, near an orphanage in a nearby city.



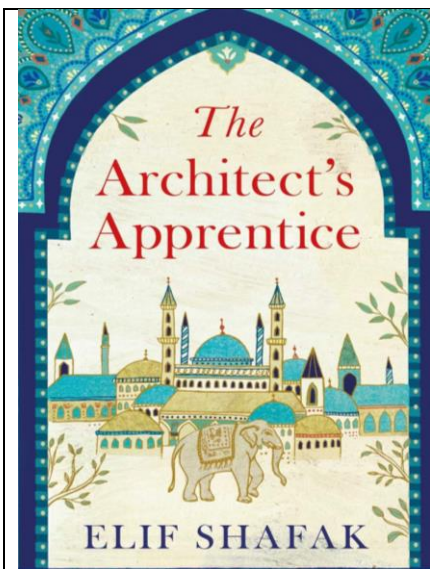
Semple, Marie
Where'd you go, Bernadette (2012)

When her daughter Bee claims a family trip to Antarctica as a reward for perfect grades, Bernadette, a fiercely intelligent shut-in, throws herself into preparations for the trip. But worn down by years of trying to live the Seattle life she never wanted, Ms. Fox is on the brink of a meltdown. And after a school fundraiser goes disastrously awry at her hands, she disappears, leaving her family to pick up the pieces-- which is exactly what Bee does, weaving together an elaborate web of emails, invoices, and school memos that reveals a secret past Bernadette has been hiding for decades. Where'd You Go Bernadette is an ingenious and unabashedly entertaining novel about a family coming to terms with who they are and the power of a daughter's love for her mother.



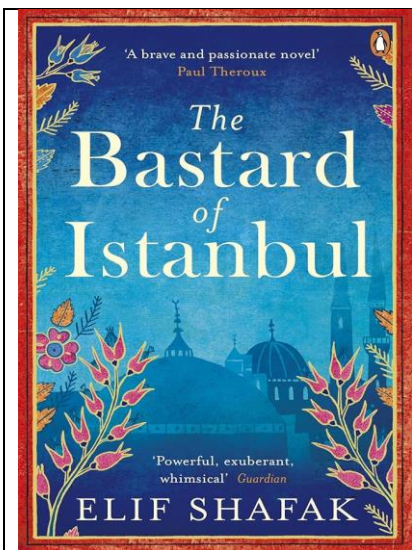
Setterfield, Diane
Once Upon a River (2017)

Some say the river drowned her...Some say it brought her back to life.
On a dark midwinter's night in an ancient inn on the Thames, the regulars are entertaining themselves by telling stories when the door bursts open and in steps an injured stranger. In his arms is the drowned corpse of a child.
Hours later, the dead girl stirs, takes a breath and returns to life.
Is it a miracle?
Is it magic?
And who does the little girl belong to?
An exquisitely crafted historical mystery brimming with folklore, suspense and romance, as well as with the urgent scientific curiosity of the Victorian age.



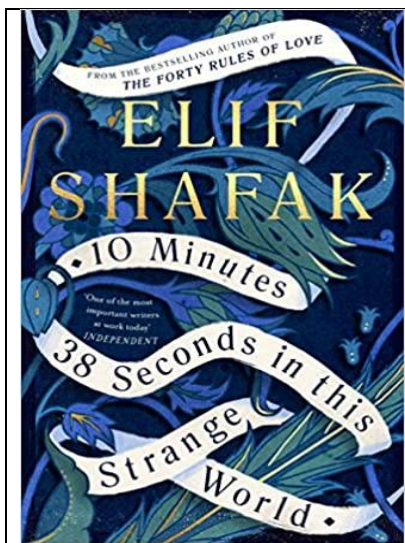
Shafak, Elif
The Architect's Apprentice (2013)

In 1540, twelve-year-old Jahan arrives in Istanbul. As an animal tamer in the sultan's menagerie, he looks after the exceptionally smart elephant Chota and befriends (and falls for) the sultan's beautiful daughter, Princess Mihrimah. A palace education leads Jahan to Mimar Sinan, the empire's chief architect, who takes Jahan under his wing as they construct (with Chota's help) some of the most magnificent buildings in history. Yet even as they build Sinan's triumphant masterpieces—the incredible Suleymaniye and Selimiye mosques—dangerous undercurrents begin to emerge, with jealousy erupting among Sinan's four apprentices.



Shafak, Elif
The Bastard of Istanbul (2006)

Asya, a nineteen-year-old woman who loves Johnny Cash and the French Existentialists, and the four sisters of the Kazanci family who all live together in an extended household in Istanbul: Zehila, the zestful, headstrong youngest sister who runs a tattoo parlor and is Asya's mother; Banu, who has newly discovered herself as a clairvoyant; Cevriye, a widowed high school teacher; and Feride, a hypochondriac obsessed with impending disaster. Their one estranged brother lives in Arizona with his wife and her Armenian daughter, Armanoush. When Armanoush secretly flies to Istanbul in search of her identity, she finds the Kazanci sisters and becomes fast friends with Asya. A secret is uncovered that links the two families and ties them to the 1915 Armenian deportations and massacres.

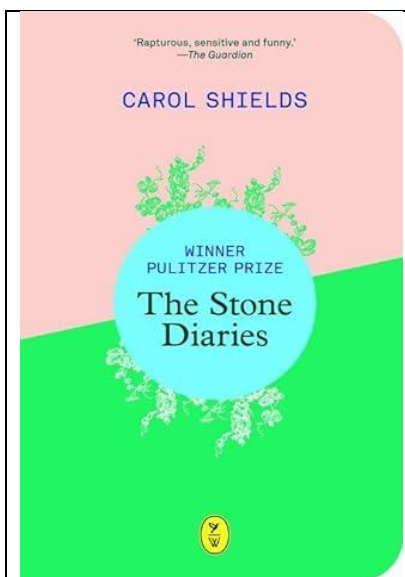


Shafak, Elif

10 minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World (2021)

In the first minute following her death, Tequila Leila's consciousness began to ebb, slowly and steadily, like a tide receding from the shore...'

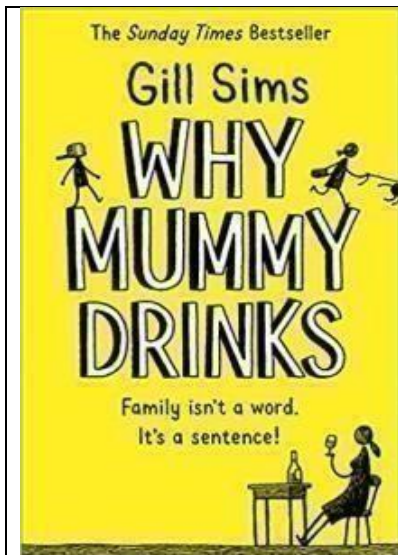
For Leila, each minute after her death recalls a sensuous memory: spiced goat stew, sacrificed by her father to celebrate the birth of a yearned-for son; bubbling vats of lemon and sugar to wax women's legs while men are at prayer; the cardamom coffee she shares with a handsome student in the brothel where she works. Each fading memory brings back the friends she made in her bittersweet life - friends who are now desperately trying to find her . . .



Shields, Carol

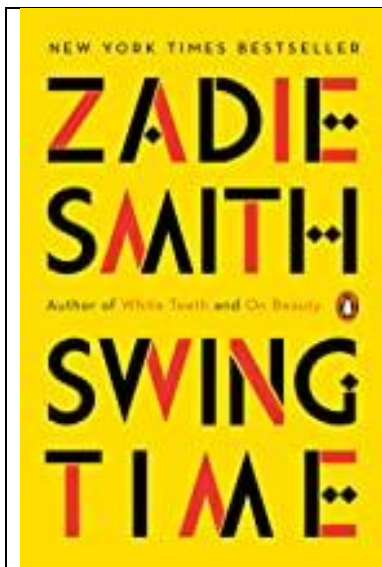
The Stone Diaries (1993)

Widely regarded as a modern classic, The Stone Diaries is the story of one woman's life; that of Daisy Goodwill Flett, a seemingly ordinary woman born in Canada in 1905. Beautifully written and deeply compassionate, it follows Daisy's life through marriage, widowhood, motherhood, and old age, as she charts her own path alongside that of an unsettled century. A subtle but affective portrait of an everywoman reflecting on an unconventional life, this multi-award winning story deals with everyday issues of existence with an extraordinary vibrancy and irresistible flair.



Sims, Gill
Why Mummy Drinks (2017)

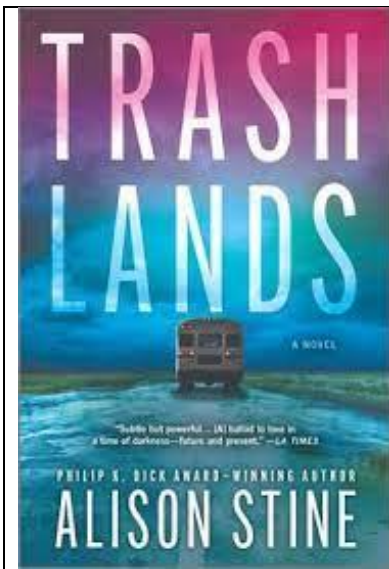
It is Mummy's 39th birthday. She is staring down the barrel of a future of people asking if she wants to go to their advanced yoga classes, and polite book clubs where everyone claims to be tiddly after a glass of Pinot Grigio and says things like 'Oooh gosh, are you having another glass?' Mummy does not want to go quietly into that good night of women with sensible haircuts who 'live for their children' and stand in the playground trying to trump each other with their offspring's extracurricular activities and achievements, and boasting about their latest holidays.



Smith, Zadie
Swing Time (2017)

Two brown girls dream of being dancers—but only one, Tracey, has talent. The other has ideas: about rhythm and time, about black bodies and black music, about what constitutes a tribe, or makes a person truly free. It's a close but complicated childhood friendship that ends abruptly in their early twenties, never to be revisited, but never quite forgotten, either.

Dazzlingly energetic and deeply human, *Swing Time* is a story about friendship and music and stubborn roots, about how we are shaped by these things and how we can survive them. Moving from northwest London to West Africa, it is an exuberant dance to the music of time.

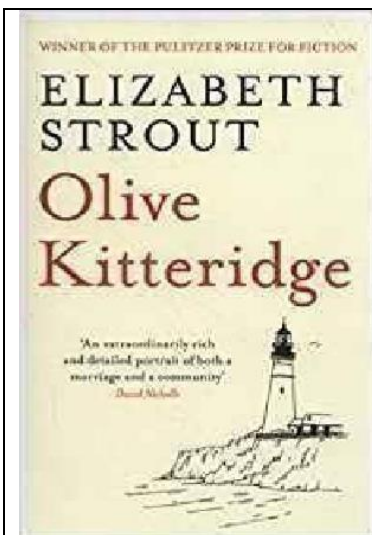


Stine, Alison
Trashlands (2021)

A few generations from now, the coastlines of the continent have been redrawn by floods and tides. Global powers have agreed to not produce any new plastics, and what is left has become valuable: garbage is currency.

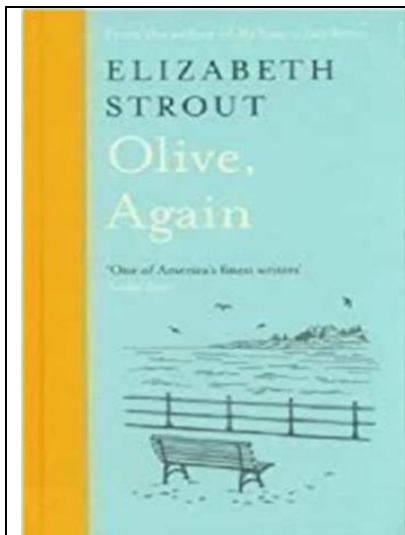
In the region-wide junkyard that Appalachia has become, Coral is a “plucker”, pulling plastic from the rivers and woods. She’s stuck in Trashlands, a dump named for the strip club at its edge, where the local women dance for an endless loop of strangers and the club's violent owner rules as unofficial mayor.

Amid the polluted landscape, Coral works desperately to save up enough to rescue her child from the recycling factories, where he is forced to work. In her stolen free hours, she does something that seems impossible in this place: Coral makes art.



Strout, Elizabeth
Olive Kitteridge (2019)

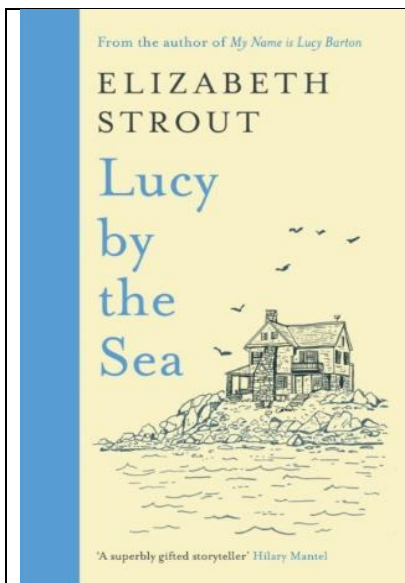
They were the Amazing Telemachus Family, who in the mid-1970s achieved widespread fame for their magic and mind reading act. That is, until the magic decided to disappear one night, live on national television. We encounter this long-forgotten family two decades on, when grandson Matty, born long after the public fall from grace, discovers powers in himself and realises his hugely deflated, heavily indebted family truly are amazing.



Strout, Elizabeth
Olive Again (2019)

Olive, Again follows the blunt, contradictory yet deeply loveable Olive Kitteridge as she grows older, navigating the second half of her life as she comes to terms with the changes - sometimes welcome, sometimes not - in her own existence and in those around her.

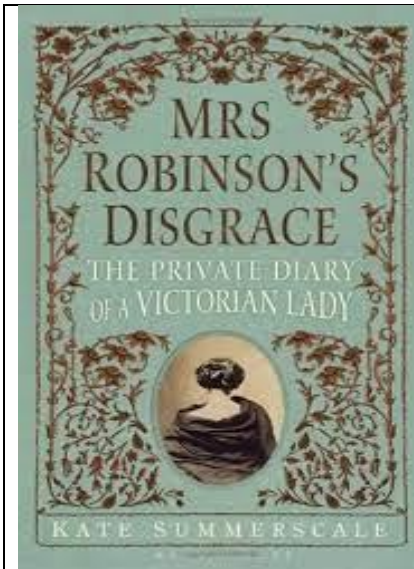
Olive adjusts to her new life with her second husband, challenges her estranged son and his family to accept him, experiences loss and loneliness, witnesses the triumphs and heartbreaks of her friends and neighbours in the small coastal town of Crosby, Maine - and, finally, opens herself to new lessons about life.



Strout, Elizabeth
Lucy by the Sea (2022)

As a panicked world goes into lockdown, Lucy Barton is uprooted from her life in Manhattan and bundled away to a small town in Maine by her ex-husband and on-again, off-again friend, William. For the next several months, it's just Lucy, William, and their complex past together in a little house nestled against the moody, swirling sea.

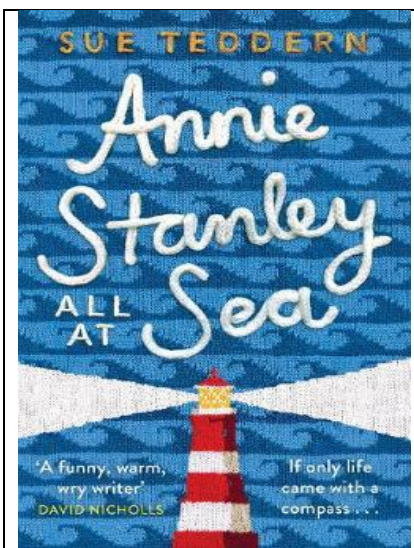
Rich with empathy and emotion, Lucy by the Sea vividly captures the fear and struggles that come with isolation, as well as the hope, peace, and possibilities that those long, quiet days can inspire. At the heart of this story are the deep human connections that unite us even when we're apart--the pain of a beloved daughter's suffering, the emptiness that comes from the death of a loved one, the promise of a new friendship, and the comfort of an old, enduring love.



Summerscale, Kate
Mrs. Robinson's Disgrace (2012)

When the married Isabella Robinson was introduced to the dashing Edward Lane at a party in 1850, she was utterly enchanted. He was 'fascinating', she told her diary, before chastising herself for being so susceptible to a man's charms. But a wish had taken hold of her, and she was to find it hard to shake...

In one of the most notorious divorce cases of the nineteenth century, Isabella Robinson's scandalous secrets were exposed to the world. Kate Summerscale brings vividly to life a frustrated Victorian wife's longing for passion and learning, companionship and love, in a society clinging to rigid ideas about marriage and female sexuality.

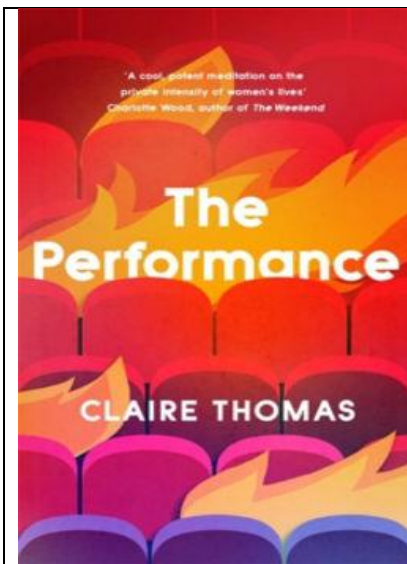


Teddern, Sue
Annie Stanley, All at Sea (2022)

Sometimes the end is only the beginning . . .

Annie is single, unemployed and just a bit stuck when her beloved father dies unexpectedly. Furious at his partner's plans to scatter his ashes somewhere of no emotional significance, Annie seizes the urn and, on a whim, decides to take it on a tour of the thirty-one sea areas that make up the shipping forecast, which her father loved listening to, despite living in landlocked St Albans. Travelling around the coastline of Britain searching for the perfect place to say goodbye, she starts to wonder if it might be time to rethink some of the relationships in her life – but is it too late for second chances?

A novel about love, loss and the importance of living life to the full, Annie Stanley, All at Sea by Sue Teddern is proof that it's often the most difficult moments in life that show us what really matters.

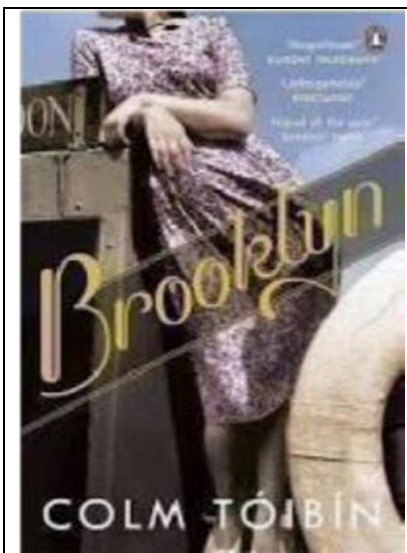


Thomas, Claire
The Performance (2021)

As bushfires rage outside the city, three women watch a performance of a Beckett play. Margot is a successful professor, preoccupied by her fraught relationship with her ailing husband. Ivy is a philanthropist with a troubled past, distracted by the snoring man beside her. Summer is a young theatre usher, anxious about the safety of her girlfriend in the fire zone.

As the performance unfolds, so does each woman's story. This richly rendered and perceptive meditation on motherhood, memory, and the challenges of living through frightful times will hold readers spellbound.

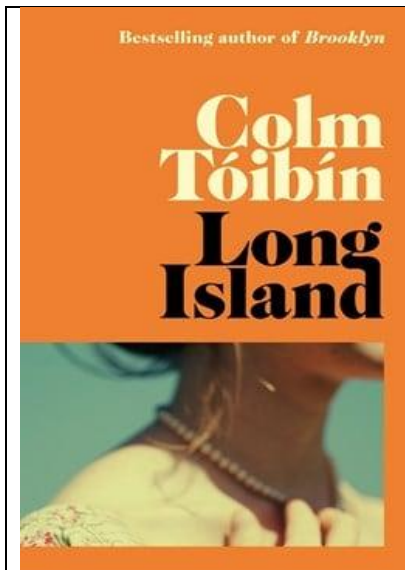
By the time the curtain falls, they will all have a new understanding of the world beyond the stage.



Tóibín, Colm
Brooklyn (2009)

Eilis Lacey has come of age in small-town Ireland in the years following World War Two. Though skilled at bookkeeping, she cannot find a job in the miserable Irish economy. When an Irish priest from Brooklyn offers to sponsor Eilis in America--to live and work in a Brooklyn neighbourhood "just like Ireland"--she decides she must go, leaving her fragile mother and her charismatic sister behind.

Eilis finds work in a department store on Fulton Street, and when she least expects it, finds love. Tony, a blond Italian from a big family, slowly wins her over with patient charm. He takes Eilis to Coney Island and Ebbets Field, and home to dinner in the two-room apartment he shares with his brothers and parents. He talks of having children who are Dodgers fans. But just as Eilis begins to fall in love with Tony, devastating news from Ireland threatens the promise of her future.

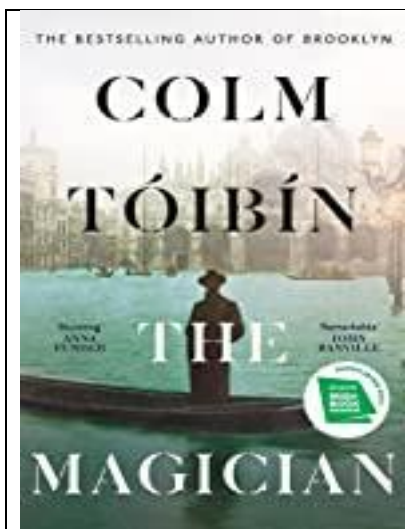


Tóibín, Colin
Long Island (2024)

A man with an Irish accent knocks on Eilis Fiorello's door on Long Island and in that moment everything changes. Eilis and Tony have built a secure, happy life here since leaving Brooklyn - perhaps a little stifled by the in-laws so close, but twenty years married and with two children looking towards a good future.

And yet this stranger will reveal something that will make Eilis question the life she has created. For the first time in years, she suddenly feels very far from home and the revelation will see her turn towards Ireland once again. Back to her mother. Back to the town and the people she had chosen to leave behind. Did she make the wrong choice marrying Tony all those years ago? Is it too late now to take a different path?

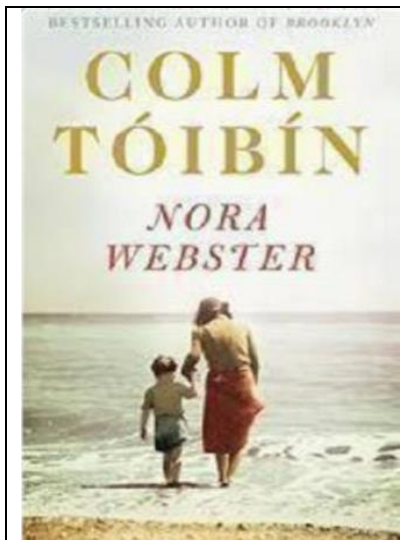
Long Island is Colm Tóibín's masterpiece: an exquisite, exhilarating novel that asks whether it is possible to truly return to the past and renew the great love that seemed gone forever.



Tóibín, Colm
The Magician (2021)

The Magician tells the story of Thomas Mann, whose life was filled with great acclaim and contradiction. He would find himself on the wrong side of history in the First World War, cheerleading the German army, but have a clear vision of the future in the second, anticipating the horrors of Nazism.

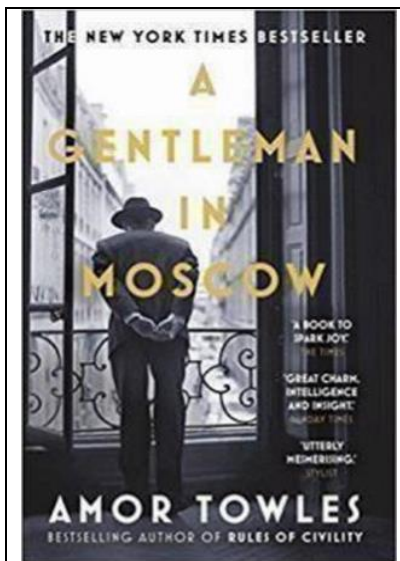
He would have six children and keep his homosexuality hidden; he was a man forever connected to his family and yet bore witness to the ravages of suicide. He would write some of the greatest works of European literature, and win the Nobel Prize, but would never return to the country that inspired his creativity.



Tóibín, Colm
Nora Webster (2014)

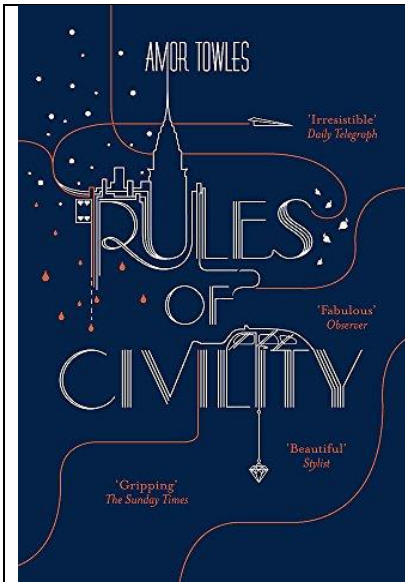
It is the late 1960s in Ireland. Nora Webster is living in a small town, looking after her four children, trying to rebuild her life after the death of her husband. She is fiercely intelligent, at times difficult and impatient, at times kind, but she is trapped by her circumstances, and waiting for any chance which will lift her beyond them.

The portrait that is painted in the years that follow is harrowing, piercingly insightful, always tender and deeply true. Colm Tóibín's Nora is a character as resonant as Anna Karenina or Madame Bovary.



Towles, Amor
A Gentleman in Moscow (2016)

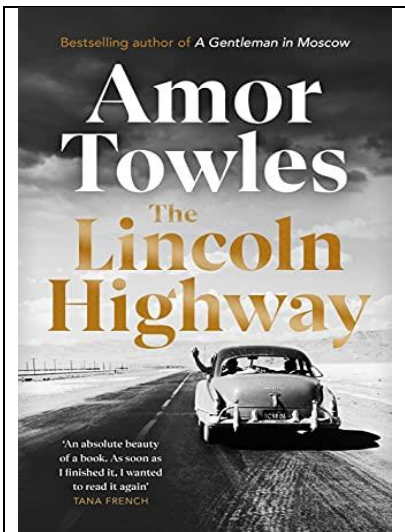
On 21 June 1922, Count Alexander Rostov – recipient of the Order of Saint Andrew, member of the Jockey Club, Master of the Hunt – is escorted out of the Kremlin, across Red Square and through the elegant revolving doors of the Hotel Metropol. Deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, the Count has been sentenced to house arrest indefinitely. But instead of his usual suite, he must now live in an attic room while Russia undergoes decades of tumultuous upheaval. Can a life without luxury be the richest of all?



Towles, Amor
Rules of Civility (2011)

On the last night of 1937, twenty-five-year-old Katey Kontent is in a second-rate Greenwich Village jazz bar when Tinker Grey, a handsome banker, happens to sit down at the neighbouring table. This chance encounter and its startling consequences propel Katey on a year-long journey into the upper echelons of New York society—where she will have little to rely upon other than a bracing wit and her own brand of cool nerve.

With its sparkling depiction of New York’s social strata, its intricate imagery and themes, and its immensely appealing characters, Rules of Civility won the hearts of readers and critics alike.

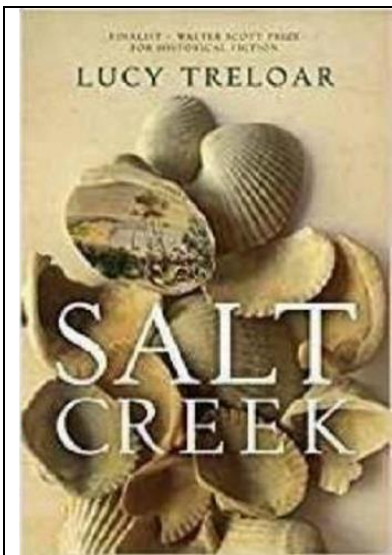


Towles, Amor
The Lincoln Highway (2021)

In June 1954, eighteen-year-old Emmett Watson is driven home to Nebraska by the warden of the juvenile work farm where he has just served fifteen months for involuntary manslaughter.

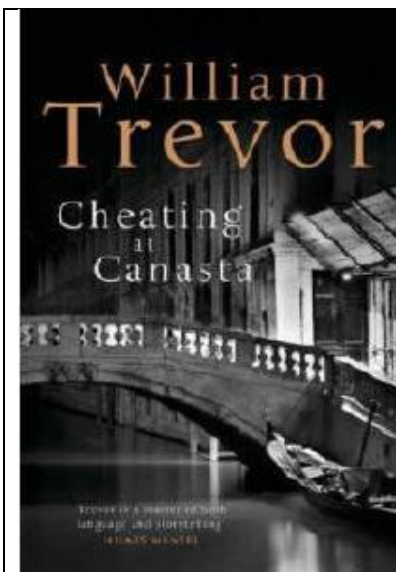
With his mother long gone, his father recently deceased, and the family farm foreclosed upon by the bank, Emmett plans to pick up his eight-year-old brother Billy and head to California to start a new life.

But when the warden drives away, Emmett discovers that two friends from the work farm have stowed away in the trunk of the warden's car. They have a very different plan for Emmett's future, one that will take the four of them on a fateful journey in the opposite direction - to New York City.



Treloar, Lucy
Salt Creek (2018)

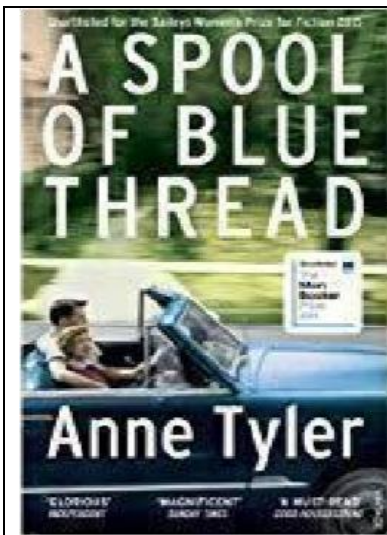
The comfortable and respectable life Hester Finch now leads in Chichester, England, could not be further from the hardship her family endured on leaving Adelaide for Salt Creek in 1855. Yet she finds her thoughts drawn back to that remote, beautiful and inhospitable outcrop of South Australia and the connections she and her siblings forged there, far from the city society in which they had been raised: encounters with the few travellers passing along the nearby stock route and the local indigenous people in particular a boy, Tully, whom Hester's father seeks to educate almost as his own son would change the fates of the Finches forever; nor would life ever be the same again for those who had long called the area home.



Trevor, William
Cheating at Canasta (2018)

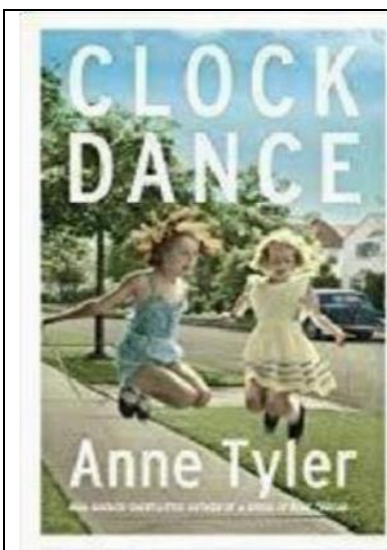
From a chance encounter between two childhood friends to the memories of a newly widowed man to a family grappling with the sale of their ancestral land, Trevor examines with grace and skill the tenuous bonds of our relationships, the strengths that hold us together, and the truths that threaten to separate us. Subtle yet powerful, his stories linger with the reader long after the words have been put away.

These twelve exquisitely nuanced tales of regret, deception, adultery, aging, and forgiveness confirm Trevor's reputation as a master of the form and one of literature's preeminent chroniclers of the human condition.



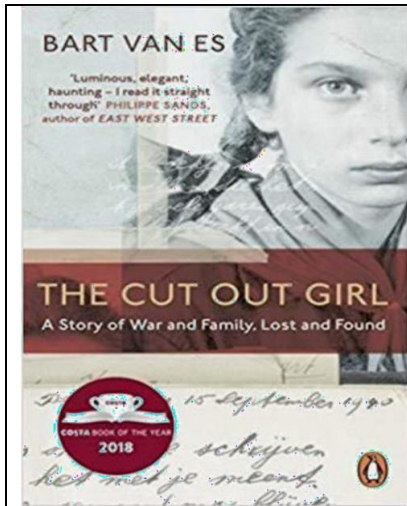
Tyler, Ann
A Spool of Blue Thread (2015)

"It was a beautiful, breezy, yellow-and-green afternoon." This is the way Abby Whitshank always begins the story of how she fell in love with Red that day in July 1959. The whole family--their two daughters and two sons, their grandchildren, even their faithful old dog--is on the porch, listening contentedly as Abby tells the tale they have heard so many times before. And yet this gathering is different too: Abby and Red are growing older, and decisions must be made about how best to look after them, and the fate of the house so lovingly built by Red's father. Brimming with the luminous insight, humour, and compassion that are Anne Tyler's hallmarks, this capacious novel takes us across three generations of the Whitshanks, their shared stories and long-held secrets, all the unguarded and richly lived moments that combine to define who and what they are as a family.



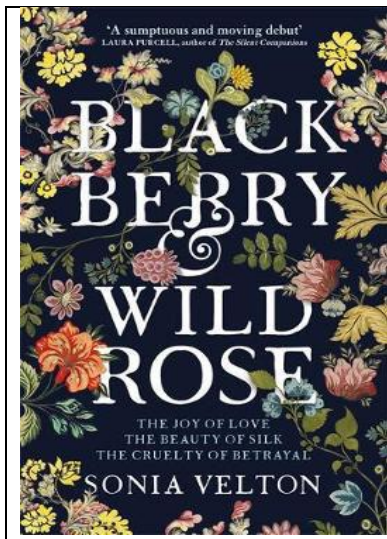
Tyler, Anne
Clock Dance (2018)

Willa Drake can count on one hand the defining moments of her life: when she was eleven and her mother disappeared, being proposed to at twenty-one, the accident that would make her a widow at forty-one. At each of these moments, Willa ended up on a path laid out for her by others. So, when she receives a phone call telling her that her son's ex-girlfriend has been shot and needs her help, she drops everything and flies across the country. The spur-of-the-moment decision to look after this woman – and her nine-year-old daughter, and her dog – will lead Willa into uncharted territory. Surrounded by new and surprising neighbours, she is plunged into the rituals that make a community and takes pleasure in the most unexpected things.



Van Es, Bart
The Cut Out Girl (2018) Non-Fiction

The comfortable and respectable life Hester Finch now leads in Chichester, England, could not be further from the hardship her family endured on leaving Adelaide for Salt Creek in 1855. Yet she finds her thoughts drawn back to that remote, beautiful and inhospitable outcrop of South Australia and the connections she and her siblings forged there, far from the city society in which they had been raised: encounters with the few travellers passing along the nearby stock route and the local indigenous people in particular a boy, Tully, whom Hester's father seeks to educate almost as his own son would change the fates of the Finches forever; nor would life ever be the same again for those who had long called the area home.

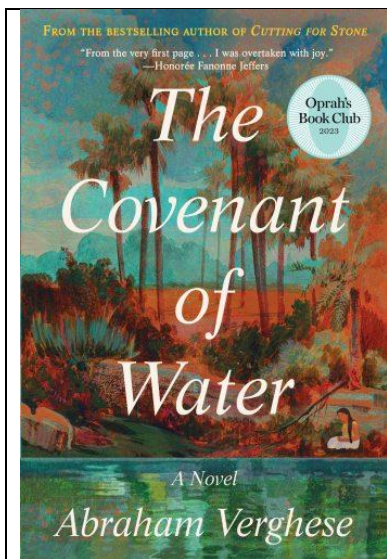


Velton, Sonia
Blackberry & Wild Rose (2019)

When Esther Thorel, the wife of a Huguenot silk-weaver, rescues Sara Kemp from a brothel she thinks she is doing God's will. Sara is not convinced being a maid is better than being a whore, but the chance to escape her grasping 'madam' is too good to refuse.

Inside the Thorels' tall house in Spitalfields, where the strange cadence of the looms fills the attic, the two women forge an uneasy relationship. The physical intimacies of washing and dressing belie the reality: Sara despises her mistress's blindness to the hypocrisy of her household, while Esther is too wrapped up in her own secrets to see Sara as anything more than another charitable cause.

It is silk that has Esther so distracted. For years she has painted her own designs, dreaming that one day her husband will weave them into reality. When he laughs at her ambition, she strikes up a relationship with one of the journeyman weavers in her attic who teaches her to weave and unwittingly sets in motion events that will change the fate of the whole Thorel household.



Verghese, Abraham
The Covenant of Water (2023)

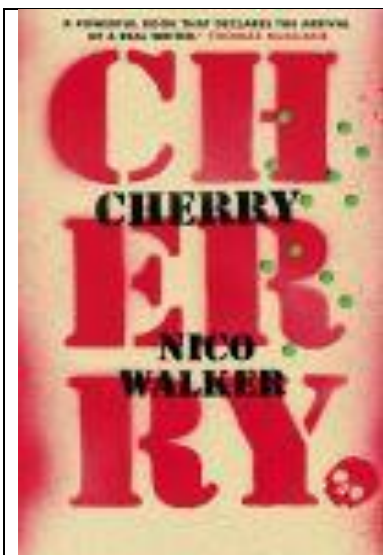
Spanning the years 1900 to 1977, *The Covenant of Water* follows a family in southern India that suffers a peculiar affliction: in every generation, at least one person dies by drowning - and in Kerala, water is everywhere. At the turn of the century a twelve-year-old girl, grieving the death of her father, is sent by boat to her wedding, where she will meet her forty-year-old husband for the first time. From this poignant beginning, the young girl and future matriarch - known as Big Ammachi - will witness unthinkable changes at home and at large over the span of her extraordinary life, full of the joys and trials of love and the struggles of hardship. A shimmering evocation of a lost India and of the passage of time itself, *The Covenant of Water* is a hymn to progress in medicine and to human understanding, and a humbling testament to the hardships undergone by past generations for the sake of those alive today. Imbued with humour, deep emotion and the essence of life, it is one of the most masterful literary novels published in recent years.



Wait, Rebecca
I'm Sorry You Feel That Way (2023)

For Alice and Hanna, saint and sinner, growing up is a trial. There is their mother, who takes a divide-and-conquer approach to child-rearing, and their father, who takes an absent one. There is also their older brother Michael, whose disapproval is a force to be reckoned with. There is the catastrophe that is never spoken of, but which has shaped everything . . .

As adults, Alice and Hanna must deal with disappointments in work and in love as well as increasingly complicated family tensions, and lives that look dismayingly dissimilar to what they'd intended. They must look for a way to repair their own fractured relationship, and they must finally choose their own approach to their dominant mother: submit or burn the house down. And they must decide at last whether life is really anything more than (as Hanna would have it) a tragedy with a few hilarious moments.

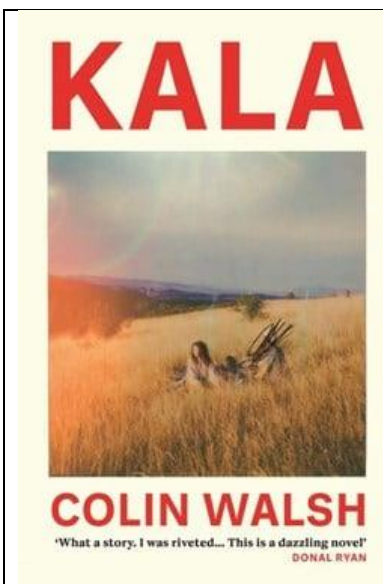


Walker, Nico
Cherry (2018)

Cleveland, 2003. A young man is just a college freshman when he meets Emily. They share a passion for Edward Albee and Ecstasy and fall hard and fast in love. But soon Emily has to move home to Elba, New York and he flunks out of school and joins the Army.

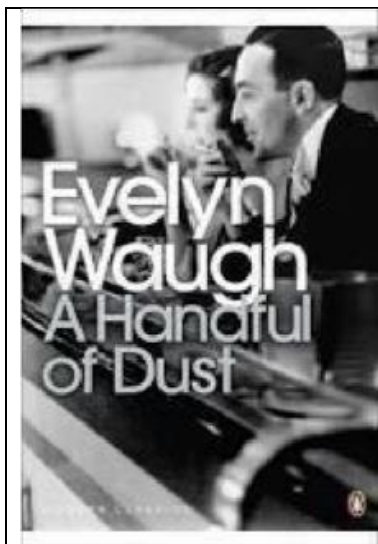
Desperate to keep their relationship alive, they marry before he ships out to Iraq.

But as an Army medic, he is unprepared for the grisly reality that awaits him. His fellow soldier's smoke: they huff computer duster; they take painkillers; they watch porn. And many of them die. He and Emily try to make their long-distance marriage work, but when he returns from Iraq, his PTSD is profound, and the drugs on the street have changed. The opioid crisis is beginning to swallow up the Midwest. Soon he is hooked on heroin, and so is Emily. They attempt a normal life, but with their money drying up, he turns to the one thing he thinks he could be really good at--robbing banks.



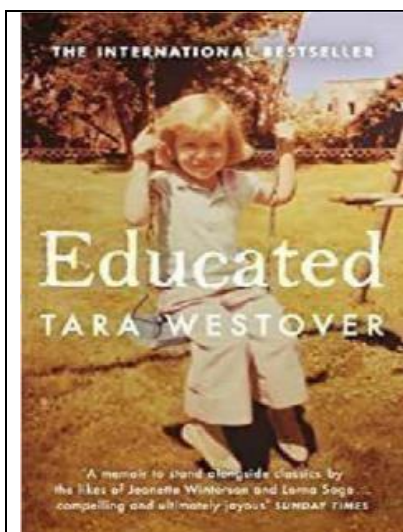
Walsh, Colm
KALA (2023)

In the seaside town of Kinlough, on Ireland's west coast, three old friends are thrown together for the first time in years. They - Helen, Joe and Mush - were part of an original group of six inseparable teenagers in the summer of 2003, with motherless, reckless Kala Lanann as their group's white-hot centre. Soon after that summer's peak, Kala disappeared without a trace. Now it's fifteen years later: Helen has reluctantly returned to Ireland for her father's wedding; Joe is a world-famous musician, newly back in town; and Mush has never left, too scared to venture beyond the counter of his mother's cafe. But human remains have been discovered in the woods. Two more girls have gone missing. And as past and present begin to collide, the estranged friends are forced to confront their own complicity in the events that led to Kala's disappearance, and to try to stop Kinlough's violent patterns repeating themselves once again... Against the backdrop of a town suffocating on its own secrets, in a story that builds from a smoulder to a stunning climax, Kala brilliantly examines the sometimes brutal costs of belonging, as well as the battle in the human heart between vengeance and forgiveness, despair and redemption.



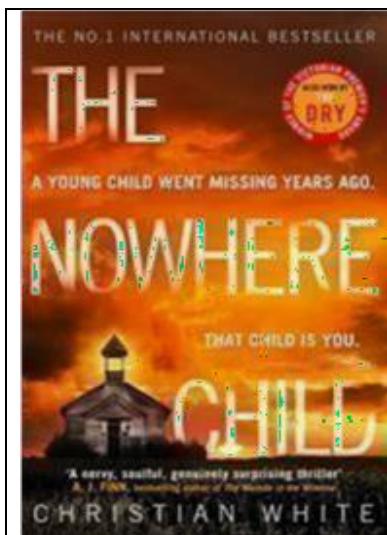
Waugh, Evelyn
A Handful of Dust (1934)

'It would be a dull world if we all thought alike.' After seven years of marriage, the beautiful Lady Brenda Last is bored with life at Hetton Abbey, the Gothic mansion that is the pride and joy of her husband, Tony. She drifts into an affair with the shallow socialite John Beaver and forsakes Tony for the Belgravia set. Brilliantly combining tragedy, comedy and savage irony, A Handful of Dust captures the irresponsible mood of the 'crazy and sterile generation' between the wars. The Penguin English Library - collectable general readers' editions of the best fiction in English, from the eighteenth century to the end of the Second World War.



Westover, Tara
Educated (2018) **Non-Fiction**

Tara Westover and her family grew up preparing for the End of Days but, according to the government, she didn't exist. She hadn't been registered for a birth certificate. She had no school records because she'd never set foot in a classroom, and no medical records because her father didn't believe in hospitals. As she grew older, her father became more radical and her brother more violent. At sixteen, Tara knew she had to leave home. In doing so she discovered both the transformative power of education, and the price she had to pay for it.



White, Christian
Nowhere Child (2018)

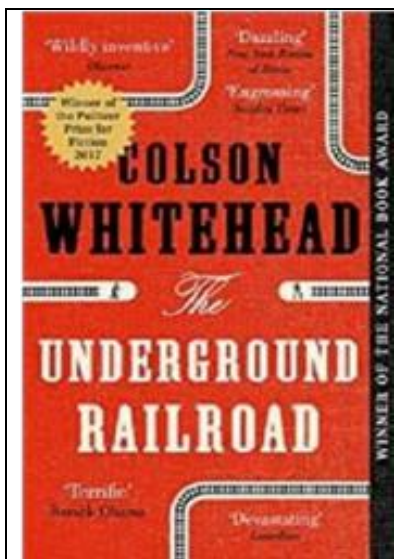
A child was stolen twenty years ago Little Sammy Went vanishes from her home in Manson, Kentucky – an event that devastates her family and tears apart the town’s deeply religious community. And somehow that missing girl is you Kim Leamy, an Australian photographer, is approached by a stranger who turns her world upside down – he claims she is the kidnapped Sammy and that everything she knows about herself is based on a lie.



Whitehead, Colson
Nickel Boys (2019)

Elwood Curtis has taken the words of Dr Martin Luther King to heart: he is as good as anyone. Abandoned by his parents, brought up by his loving, strict and clear-sighted grandmother, Elwood is about to enroll in the local black college. But given the time and the place, one innocent mistake is enough to destroy his future, and so Elwood arrives at The Nickel Academy, which claims to provide 'physical, intellectual and moral training' which will equip its inmates to become 'honourable and honest men'.

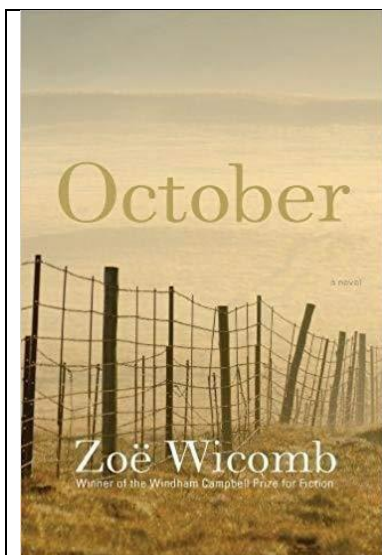
In reality, the Nickel Academy is a chamber of horrors, where physical, emotional and sexual abuse is rife, where corrupt officials and tradesmen do a brisk trade in supplies intended for the school, and where any boy who resists is likely to disappear 'out back'. Stunned to find himself in this vicious environment, Elwood tries to hold on to Dr King's ringing assertion, 'Throw us in jail, and we will still love you.' But Elwood's fellow inmate and new friend Turner thinks Elwood is naive and worse; the world is crooked, and the only way to survive is to emulate the cruelty and cynicism of their oppressors.



Whitehead, Colson
Underground Railroad (2020)

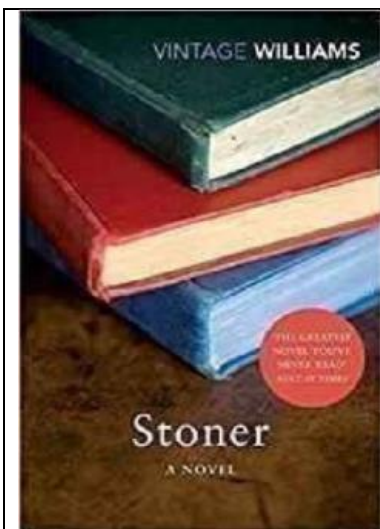
A dilapidated box car pulled along subterranean tracks by a steam locomotive, picking up fugitives wherever it can. Cora and Caesar's first stop is South Carolina, in a city that initially seems like a haven. But its placid surface masks an infernal scheme designed for its unknowing black inhabitants. And even worse: Ridgeway, the relentless slave catcher sent to find Cora, is close on their heels. Forced to flee again, Cora embarks on a harrowing flight, state by state, seeking true freedom.

At each stop on her journey, Cora encounters a different world. As Whitehead brilliantly recreates the unique terrors for black people in the pre-Civil War era, his narrative seamlessly weaves the saga of America, from the brutal importation of Africans to the unfulfilled promises of the present day. The Underground Railroad is at once the story of one woman's ferocious will to escape the horrors of bondage and a shatteringly powerful meditation on history



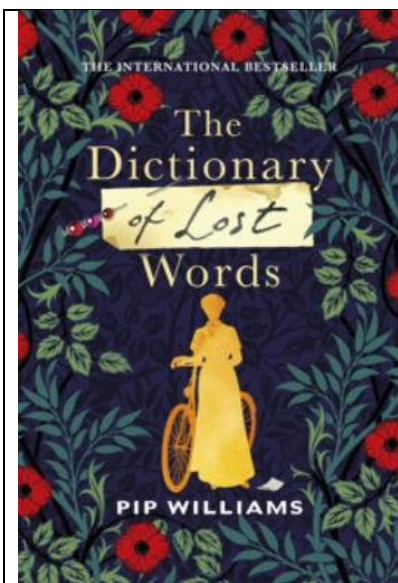
Wicomb, Zoe
October (2014)

Abandoned by her partner in Scotland, where she has been living for twenty-five years, Mercia returns to her homeland of South Africa to find her family overwhelmed by alcoholism and secrets. Poised between her life in Scotland and her life in South Africa, she recollects the past with a keen sense of irony as she searches for some idea of home. In Scotland, her life feels unfamiliar; her apartment sits empty. In South Africa, her only brother is a shell of his former self, pushing her away. And yet in both places she is needed, if only she could understand what for. Plumbing the emotional limbo of a woman who is isolated and torn from her roots, October is a stark and utterly compelling novel about the contemporary experience of an intelligent immigrant, adrift among her memories and facing an uncertain middle age.



Williams, John
Stoner (1965)

William Stoner enters the University of Missouri at nineteen to study agriculture. A seminar on English literature changes his life, and he never returns to work on his father's farm. Stoner becomes a teacher. He marries the wrong woman. His life is quiet, and after his death his colleagues remember him rarely. Yet with truthfulness, compassion and intense power, this novel uncovers a story of universal value - of the conflicts, defeats and victories of the human race that pass unrecorded by history - and in doing so reclaims the significance of an individual life.

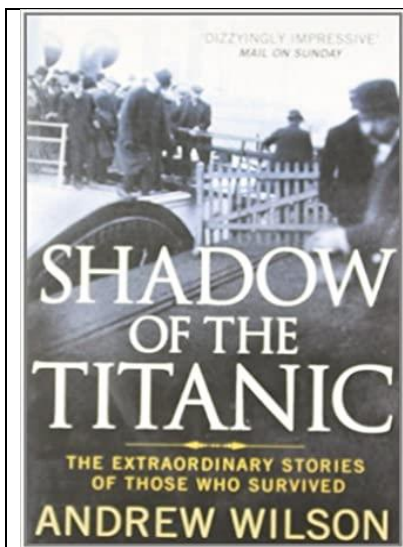


Williams, Pip
A Dictionary of Lost Words (2020)

Motherless and irrepressibly curious, Esme spends her childhood in the Scriptorium, a garden shed in Oxford where her father and a team of lexicographers are gathering words for the very first Oxford English Dictionary.

Esme's place is beneath the sorting table, unseen and unheard. One day, she sees a slip containing the word 'bondmaid' flutter to the floor unclaimed. Over time, Esme realises that some words are considered more important than others, and that words and meanings relating to women's experiences often go unrecorded.

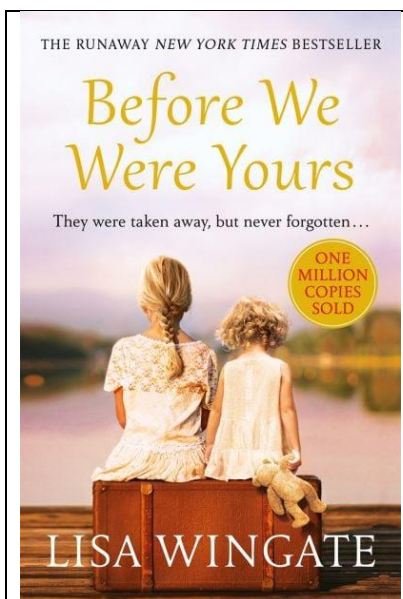
She begins to collect words for another dictionary: The Dictionary of Lost Words.



Wilson, Andrew
Shadow of the Titanic (2011) Non-fiction

In the early hours of 15 April 1912, after the majestic liner Titanic had split apart and the 1,500 men, women and children struggled to stay alive in the freezing Atlantic, the sea was alive with the sound of screaming. Then, as the ship sank to the ocean floor and the passengers slowly died from hypothermia, a deathly silence settled over the sea. Yet the echoes of that night reverberated through the lives of each of the 705 survivors. Shadow of the Titanic tells the extraordinary stories of some of those who survived.

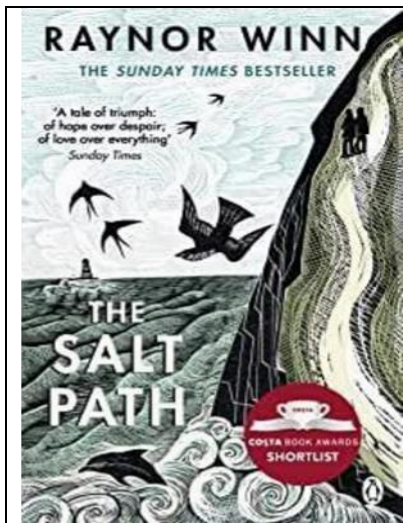
Although we think we know the story of the Titanic - the famously unsinkable ship that hit an iceberg on its maiden voyage from Britain to America in April 1912 - little has been written about what happened to the survivors after the tragedy. How did the loss of the ship shape the lives of the people who survived? How did those who were saved feel about those who perished? And how did they remember that terrible night, in effect a disaster that has been likened to the destruction of a small town?



Wingate, Lisa
Before We Were Yours (2017)

Memphis, 1939. Twelve-year-old Rill Foss and her four younger siblings live a magical life aboard their family's Mississippi River shantyboat. But when their father must rush their mother to the hospital one stormy night, Rill is left in charge—until strangers arrive in force. Wrenched from all that is familiar and thrown into a Tennessee Children's Home Society orphanage, the Foss children are assured that they will soon be returned to their parents—but they quickly realize the dark truth. At the mercy of the facility's cruel director, Rill fights to keep her sisters and brother together in a world of danger and uncertainty.

Aiken, South Carolina, present day. Born into wealth and privilege, Avery Stafford seems to have it all: a successful career as a federal prosecutor, a handsome fiancé, and a lavish wedding on the horizon. But when Avery returns home to help her father weather a health crisis, a chance encounter leaves her with uncomfortable questions and compels her to take a journey through her family's long-hidden history, on a path that will ultimately lead either to devastation or to redemption.

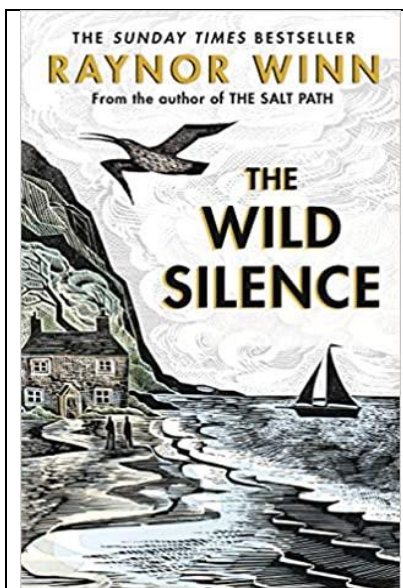


Winn, Raynor
Salt Path (2018) **Non-Fiction**

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 Southwest 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. Ultimately, it is a portrayal of home, and how it can be lost, rebuilt and rediscovered in the most unexpected ways.



Winn, Raynor
The Wild Silence (2020) **Non-Fiction**

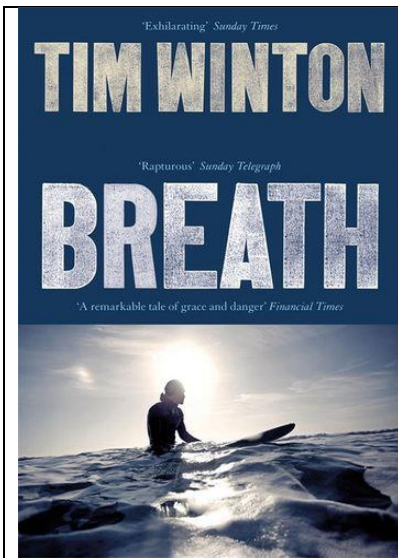
After walking 630 miles homeless along The Salt Path, the windswept and wild English coastline now feels like their home.

And despite Moth's terminal diagnosis, against all medical odds, he seems revitalized in nature - outside, they discover that anything is possible.

Now, life beyond The Salt Path awaits. As they return to four walls, the sense of home is illusive and returning to normality is proving difficult - until an incredible gesture by someone who reads their story changes everything:

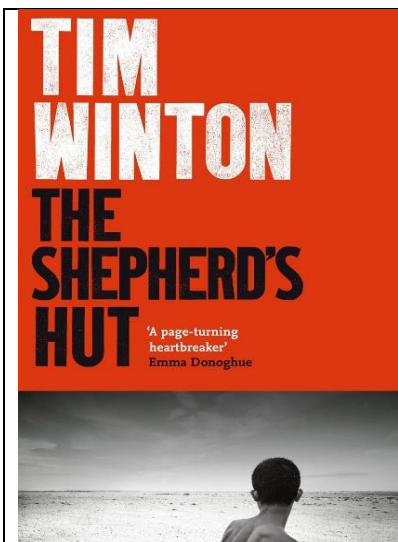
A chance to breathe life back into a beautiful but neglected farmhouse nestled deep in the Cornish hills; rewilding the land and returning nature to its hedgerows becomes their new path.

Along the way, Raynor and Moth learn more about the land that envelopes them, find friends both new and old, and, of course, embark on another windswept adventure when the opportunity arises.



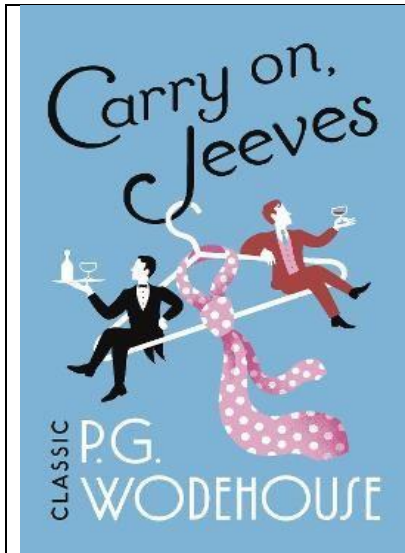
Winton, Tim
Breath (2008)

On the wild, lonely coast of Western Australia, two thrill-seeking and barely adolescent boys fall into the enigmatic thrall of veteran big-wave surfer Sando. Together they form an odd but elite trio. The grown man initiates the boys into a kind of Spartan ethos, a regimen of risk and challenge, where they test themselves in storm swells on remote and shark-infested reefs, pushing each other to the edges of endurance, courage, and sanity. But where is all this heading? Why is their mentor's past such forbidden territory? And what can explain his American wife's peculiar behaviour? Venturing beyond all limits—in relationships, in physical challenge, and in sexual behaviour—there is a point where oblivion is the only outcome. Full of Winton's lyrical genius for conveying physical sensation, *Breath* is a rich and atmospheric coming-of-age tale from one of world literature's finest storytellers.



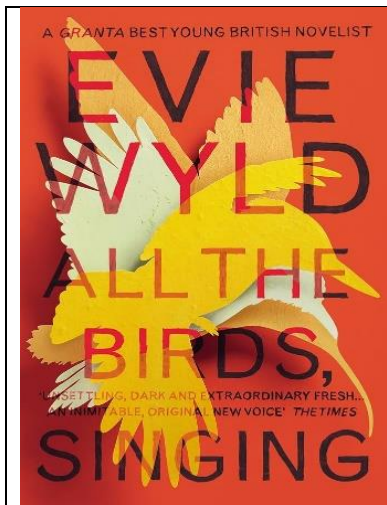
Winton, Tim
The Shepherd's Hut (2018)

In *The Shepherd's Hut*, Winton crafts the story of Jaxie Clackton, a brutalized rural youth who flees from the scene of his father's violent death and strikes out for the vast wilds of Western Australia. All he carries with him is a rifle and a waterjug. All he wants is peace and freedom. But surviving in the harsh saltlands alone is a savage business. And once he discovers he's not alone out there, all Jaxie's plans go awry. He meets a fellow exile, the ruined priest Fintan MacGillis, a man he's never certain he can trust, but on whom his life will soon depend.



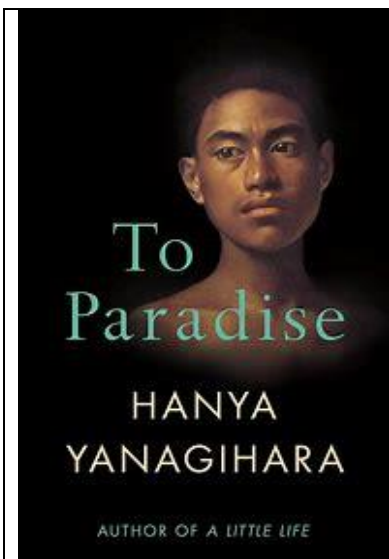
Wodehouse, P.G.
Carry on, Jeeves (1925)

This hilarious collection of seven unabridged short stories features the hapless though hilarious Bertie Wooster and the quintessential English gentleman's gentleman—his 'man' Jeeves. These marvellous stories introduce us to Jeeves, whose first ever duty is to cure Bertie's raging hangover. The collection Jeeves Takes Charge, Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest, The Artistic Career of Corky, The Aunt and the Sluggard, Clustering Round Young Bingo, Jeeves and the Hard-boiled Egg and The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy.



Wyld, Evie
All the Birds, Singing (2013)

Jake Whyte is living on her own in an old farmhouse on a craggy British island, a place of ceaseless rain and battering wind. Her disobedient collie, Dog, and a flock of sheep are her sole companions, which is how she wants it to be. But every few nights something—or someone—picks off one of the sheep and sounds a new deep pulse of terror. There are foxes in the woods, a strange boy and a strange man, and rumours of an obscure, formidable beast. And there is also Jake's past, hidden thousands of miles away and years ago, held in the silences about her family and the scars that stripe her back—a past that threatens to break into the present. With exceptional artistry and empathy, All the Birds, Singing reveals an isolated life in all its struggles and stubborn hopes, unexpected beauty, and hard-won redemption.

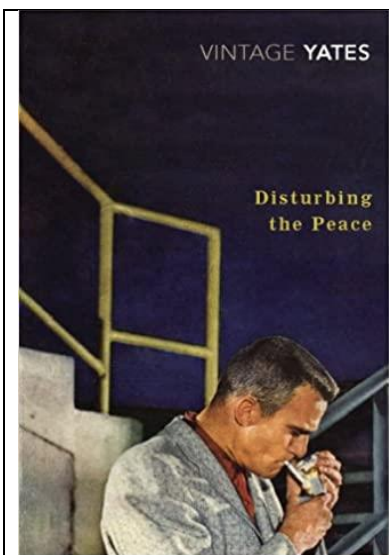


Yanagihara, Hanya

To Paradise (2022)

In an alternate version of 1893 America, New York is part of the Free States, where people may live and love whomever they please (or so it seems). The fragile young scion of a distinguished family resists betrothal to a worthy suitor, drawn to a charming music teacher of no means. In a 1993 Manhattan besieged by the AIDS epidemic, a young Hawaiian man lives with his much older, wealthier partner, hiding his troubled childhood and the fate of his father. And in 2093, in a world riven by plagues and governed by totalitarian rule, a powerful scientist's damaged granddaughter tries to navigate life without him – and solve the mystery of her husband's disappearances.

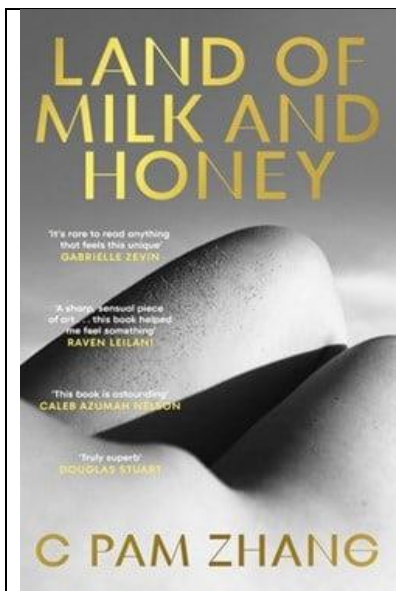
These three sections are joined in an enthralling and ingenious symphony, as recurring notes and themes deepen and enrich one another. What unites not just the characters, but these Americas, are their reckonings with the qualities that make us human: Fear. Love. Shame. Need. Loneliness.



Yates, Richard

Disturbing the Peace (1975)

To all appearances, John Wilder has all the trappings of success, circa 1960: a promising career in advertising, a loving family, a beautiful apartment, even a country home. John's evenings are spent with associates at quiet Manhattan lounges and his weekends with friends at glittering cocktail parties. But something deep within this seemingly perfect life has long since gone wrong. Something has disturbed John's fragile peace, and he can no longer find solace in fleeting affairs or alcohol. The anger, the drinking, and the recklessness are building to a crescendo—and they're about to take down John's family and his career. What happens next will send John on a long, strange journey—at once tragic and inevitable.



Zhang, C. Pam
Land of Milk and Honey (2023)

A smog has spread. Food crops are disappearing. A chef escapes her career in London to take a job at a decadent mountaintop colony seemingly free of the world's troubles. There, her enigmatic employer and his visionary daughter have built a lush new life for the global elite, one that reawakens the chef to the pleasures of taste, touch and her own body. In this atmosphere of hidden wonders and seductive violence, the chef's boundaries undergo a thrilling erosion. Soon she is pushed to the centre of a startling attempt to reshape the world far beyond the plate. Sensuous and surprising, joyous and bitingly sharp, told in alluring language, Land of Milk and Honey is a striking novel about food, sex and the intricacies of desire and longing.

