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City Library

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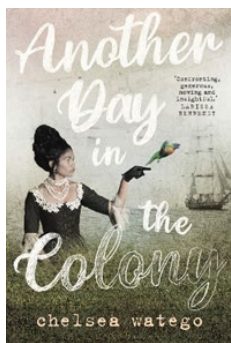
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<i>Book Lovers</i>	<i>Lessons in Chemistry</i>	<i>The Midnight Library</i>
<i>Homegoing</i>	<i>Tell Me Lies</i>	<i>Thursday Murder Club</i>
<i>How Decent Folks Behave</i>	<i>The Drowning</i>	<i>Where the Crawdads Sing</i>

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Another Day in the Colony - Chelsea Watego

Essays

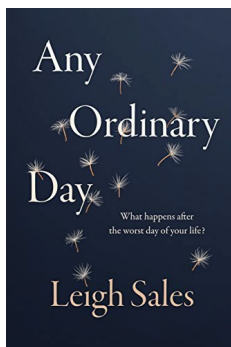
(256 pages)

In this collection of deeply insightful and powerful essays, Chelsea Watego examines the ongoing and daily racism faced by First Nations peoples in so-called Australia. Rather than offer yet another account of 'the Indigenous problem', she theorises a strategy for living in a society that has only ever imagined Indigenous peoples as destined to die out.

Drawing on her own experiences and observations of the operations of the colony, she exposes the lies that settlers tell about Indigenous people. In refusing such stories, Chelsea narrates her own: fierce, personal, sometimes funny, sometimes anguished. She speaks not of fighting back but of standing her ground against colonialism in academia, in court and in the media. It's a stance that takes its toll on relationships, career prospects and even the body. Yet when told to have hope, Watego's response rings clear: *F**k hope. Be sovereign.*

Themes: politics, memoirs, history

Want to read



Any Ordinary Day - Leigh Sales

Non-Fiction

(272 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



As a journalist, Leigh Sales often encounters people experiencing the worst moments of their lives in the full glare of the media. But one particular string of bad news stories – and a terrifying brush with her own mortality – sent her looking for answers about how vulnerable each of us is to a life-changing event. What are our chances of actually experiencing one? What do we fear most and why? And when the worst does happen, what comes next?

In this wise and layered book, Leigh talks intimately with people who've faced the unimaginable, from terrorism to natural disaster to simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Expecting broken lives, she instead finds strength, hope, even humour. Leigh brilliantly condenses the cutting-edge research on the way the human brain processes fear and grief and poses the questions we too often ignore out of awkwardness. Along the way, she offers an unguarded account of her own challenges and what she's learned about coping with life's unexpected blows.

Themes: trauma, grief, resilience

Want to read



Becoming - Michelle Obama

Memoir

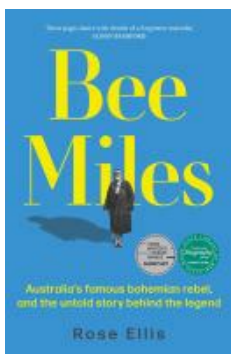
(426 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



In a life filled with meaning and accomplishment, Michelle Obama has emerged as one of the most iconic and compelling women of our era. As First Lady of the United States of America-the first African-American to serve in that role-she helped create the most welcoming and inclusive White House in history, while also establishing herself as a powerful advocate for women and girls in the U.S. and around the world, dramatically changing the ways that families pursue healthier and more active lives, and standing with her husband as he led America through some of its most harrowing moments. Along the way, she showed us a few dance moves, crushed Carpool Karaoke, and raised two down-to-earth daughters under an unforgiving media glare. In her memoir, a work of deep reflection and mesmerizing storytelling, Michelle Obama invites readers into her world, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her-from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world's most famous address. With unerring honesty and lively wit, she describes her triumphs and her disappointments, both public and private, telling her full story as she has lived it-in her own words and on her own terms.

Themes: Leadership, politics, feminism, history

Want to read



Bee Miles: Australia's famous bohemian rebel... - Rose Ellis

Memoir

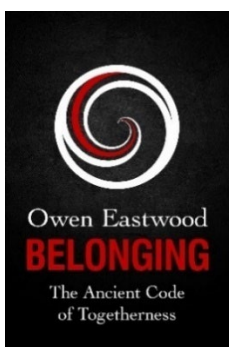
(322 pages) (Large Print and e-Audiobook available)



The untold story of the uncompromising and fearless woman who captivated mid-20th century Australia with her spectacular acts of defiance. Bee Miles was a truly larger-than-life character. Famous for being outrageous in public, or, as she said, living 'recklessly', she shocked and intrigued cities and towns across Australia. But she was no ordinary wanderer. Born into a wealthy family, Bee moved in Sydney's literary and artistic circles in the 1920s and 1930s before she took up residence on the streets. A consummate performer and a perceptive critic, she caught the public's imagination with her spectacular acts of defiance, emerging majestically from the surf with a knife strapped to each thigh, stopping a country train in its tracks, hitchhiking across remote Australia and drawing large city crowds with her Shakespeare recitations. She was once even voted more famous than the Prime Minister. She was also repeatedly incarcerated in prisons, confined to mental hospitals and treated brutally by a succession of authority figures, starting with her father. Bee constantly defied conventional expectations of female behaviour.

Themes: Australian, historical, eccentrics

Want to read



Belonging - Owen Eastwood

Non-Fiction

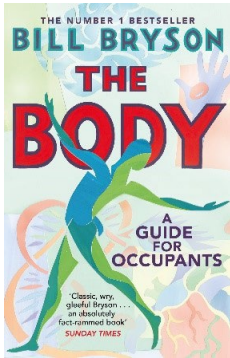
(311 pages)

Whakapapa. You belong here. Whakapapa is a Maori idea which embodies our universal human need to belong. It represents a powerful spiritual belief - that each of us is part of an unbroken and unbreakable chain of people who share a sacred identity and culture.

Owen Eastwood places this concept at the core of his methods to maximize a team's performance. In this book he reveals, for the first time, the ethos that has made him one of the most in-demand Performance Coaches in the world. In Belonging, Owen weaves together insights from homo sapiens' evolutionary story and ancestral wisdom. He shines a light on where these powerful ideas are applied around our world in high-performing settings encompassing sport, business, the arts and military.

Themes: Leadership, culture, philosophy, New Zealand

Want to read



The Body: A Guide for Occupants - Bill Bryson

Science

(532 pages) (MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

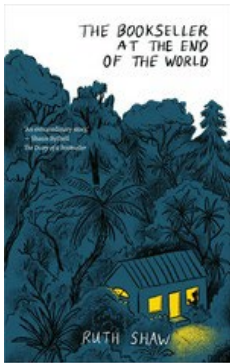


"We spend our whole lives in one body and yet most of us have practically no idea how it works and what goes on inside it. The idea of the book is simply to try to understand the extraordinary contraption that is us." Bill Bryson sets off to explore the human body, how it functions and its remarkable ability to heal itself. Full of extraordinary facts and astonishing stories The Body: A Guide for Occupants is a brilliant, often very funny attempt to understand the miracle of our physical and neurological make up. A wonderful successor to A Short History of Nearly Everything, this new book is an instant classic. It will have you marvelling at the form you occupy, and celebrating the genius of your existence, time and time again.

"What I learned is that we are infinitely more complex and wondrous, and often more mysterious, than I had ever suspected. There really is no story more amazing than the story of us." Bill Bryson.

Themes: Science, health, humour

Want to read



The Bookseller at the End of the World - Ruth Shaw

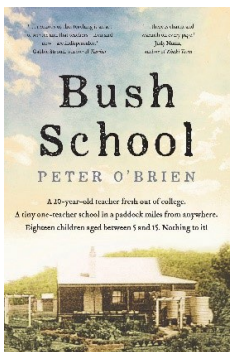
Memoir

(320 pages) (Large Print)

Ruth Shaw weaves together stories of the characters who visit her bookshops, musings about favourite books, and bittersweet stories from her full and varied life. She's sailed through the Pacific for years, been held up by pirates, worked at Sydney's Kings Cross with drug addicts and prostitutes, campaigned on numerous environmental issues, and worked the yacht Breaksea Girl with her husband, Lance. Underlining all her wanderings and adventures are some very deep losses and long-held pain. Balancing that out is her beautiful love story with Lance, and her delightful sense of humour. This will make you weep and make you laugh and make you want to read more books - and make you want to visit Ruth and her two wee bookshops.

Themes: Bookshops, self-improvement, New Zealand

Want to read



Bush School - Peter O'Brien

Memoir

(296 pages) (e-Book available)

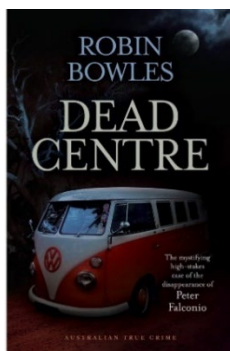


A charming story of a time long-gone and the struggles of a young man with his first teaching assignment in a village at the back of beyond. There was a bed, a timber floor, thin tar paper on one side for privacy from the nearby road but nothing else. The flimsiest of 'walls', no pegs or nails to hang even a hat, no door, no rug for cold morning bare feet, no bookshelf for a voracious reader, no bedside cupboard for a lamp or a glass of water, no light source - just a bed and a suitcase for the next two years.

Bush School is an engaging and fascinating memoir of how a young man rose to a challenge most would shrink from today. It tells movingly of the resilience and spirit of children, the importance of learning and the transformative power of teaching.

Themes: Education, resilience, friendship

Want to read



Dead Centre - Robin Bowles

True Crime

(464 pages)

Twenty-one years after the disappearance of Peter Falconio, many questions remain unanswered. Exactly what happened on the night of 14 July 2001 has mystified experts and family members alike, while Bradley Murdoch still protests his innocence.

The subject of relentless investigation by Australia's foremost true crime writer, as part of which she spent over fifty hours interviewing Bradley Murdoch, this case presents a fascinating mix of high-octane criminals, forensic experts, seedy drug underworlds, worldwide media networks and the realities of a high-profile, high-stakes legal process. Sometimes there are no winners.

Themes: True crime, Australia, criminal investigations, abduction, disappearance

Want to read



Did I Ever Tell You This? - Sam Neill

Memoir

(400 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



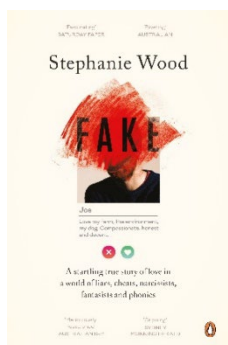
In this unexpected memoir, written in a creative burst of just a few months in 2022, Sam Neill tells the story of how he became one of the world's most celebrated actors, who has worked with everyone from Meryl Streep to Isabel Adjani, from Jeff Goldblum to Sean Connery, from Steven Spielberg to Jane Campion.

By his own account, his career has been a series of unpredictable turns of fortune. Born in 1947 in Northern Ireland, he emigrated to New Zealand at the age of seven. His family settled in Dunedin on the South Island, but young Sam was sent away to boarding school in Christchurch, where he was hopeless at sports and discovered he enjoyed acting.

Did I Ever Tell You This? is a joy to read, a marvellous and often very funny book, the work of a natural storyteller who is a superb observer of other people, and who writes with love and warmth about his family. It is also his account of his life outside film, especially in Central Otago where he established Two Paddocks, his vineyard famous for its pinot noir.

Themes: Celebrity, television, New Zealand, Australia, humour

Want to read



Fake - Stephanie Wood

Biography

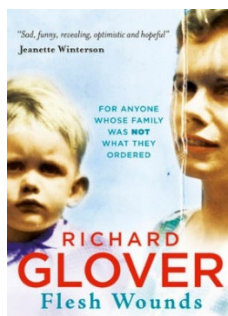
(352 pages) (MP3 available)

Aren't we all just a little bit afraid that we, or someone we care about, will be duped in love or friendship?

When Stephanie Wood meets a former architect turned farmer she embarks on an exhilarating romance with him. He seems compassionate, loving, truthful. They talk about the future. She falls in love. She also becomes increasingly beset by anxiety at his frequent cancellations, no-shows and bizarre excuses. She starts to wonder, who is this man? When she ends the relationship Stephanie reboots her journalism skills and embarks on a romantic investigation. She discovers a story of mind-boggling duplicity and manipulation. She learns that the man she thought she was in love with doesn't exist. She also finds she is not alone; that the world is full of smart people who have suffered at the hands of liars, cheats, narcissists, fantasists and phonies, people enormously skilled in the art of deception.

Themes: Media, narcissism, investigative journalism

Want to read



Flesh Wounds - Richard Glover

Memoir

(288 pages) (e-Audiobook available)

A mother who invented her past, a father who was often absent, a son who wondered if this could really be his family. Richard Glover's favourite dinner party game is called 'Who's Got the Weirdest Parents?'. It's a game he always thinks he'll win. There was his mother, a deluded snob, who made up large swathes of her past and who ran away with Richard's English teacher, a Tolkien devotee, nudist and stuffed-toy collector. There was his father, a distant alcoholic, who ran through a gamut of wives, yachts and failed dreams. And there was Richard himself, a confused teenager, vulnerable to strange men, trying to find a family he could belong to. As he eventually accepted, the only way to make sense of the present was to go back to the past - but beware of what you might find there. Truth can leave wounds - even if they are only flesh wounds. Part poignant family memoir, part rollicking venture into a 1970s Australia, this is a book for anyone who's wondered if their family is the oddest one on the planet. The answer: 'No'. There is always something stranger out there.

Themes: Humour, 1970's Australia, hope

Want to read



Found, Wanting - Natasha Sholl

Memoir

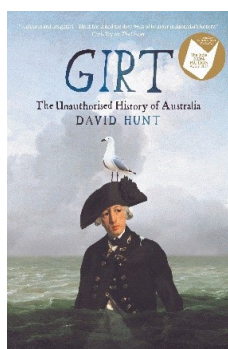
(288 pages)

On Valentine's Day, after a night of red wine and pasta and planning for their future, Natasha Sholl and her partner Rob went to bed. A few hours later, at the age of 27, his heart stopped. *Found, Wanting* tells the story of Natasha's attempt to rebuild her life in the wake of Rob's sudden death, stumbling through the grief landscape and colliding with the cultural assumptions about the 'right way' to grieve.

It is a memoir about falling in love in the aftermath of loss, and what it means to build a life in the space that death leaves. This is a book for anyone who has ever loved someone who has died. Or who has ever loved someone. Because grief is the language of love, after all.

Themes: Grief, death, acceptance

Want to read



Girt: The Unauthorised History of Australia - David Hunt

History

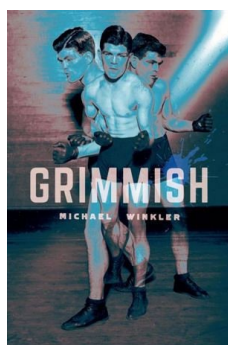
(286 pages) (e-Book available)

Girt. No word could better capture the essence of Australia...In this hilarious history, David Hunt reveals the truth of Australia's past, from megafauna to Macquarie - the cock-ups and curiosities, the forgotten eccentrics and Eureka moments that have made us who we are.

Girt introduces forgotten heroes like Mary McLoughlin, transported for the crime of "felony of sock", and Trim the cat, who beat a French monkey to become the first animal to circumnavigate Australia. It recounts the misfortunes of the escaped Irish convicts who set out to walk from Sydney to China, guided only by a hand-drawn paper compass, and explains the role of the coconut in Australia's only military coup. Our nation's beginnings are steeped in the strange, the ridiculous and the frankly bizarre. Girt proudly reclaims these stories for all of us. Not to read it would be un-Australian.

Themes: Australian history, humour, culture

Want to read



Grimmish - Michael Winkler

Biography

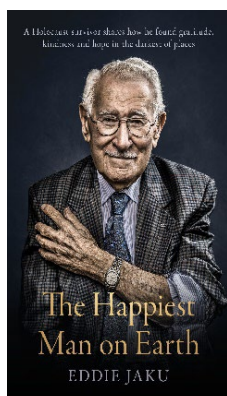
(207 pages)

Pain was Joe Grim's self-expression, his livelihood and reason for being. In 1908-09 the Italian-American boxer toured Australia, losing fights but amazing crowds with his showmanship and extraordinary physical resilience. On the east coast Grim played a supporting role in the Jack Johnson-Tommy Burns Fight of the Century; on the west coast he was committed to an insane asylum. In between he played with the concept and reality of pain in a shocking manner not witnessed before or since.

Michael Winkler braids the story of Grim in Australia and meditations on pain with thoughts on masculinity and vulnerability, plus questionable jokes, in a haymaker of experimental non-fiction.

Themes: Boxing, humour, masculinity

Want to read



The Happiest Man on Earth - Eddie Jaku

Biography

(195 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

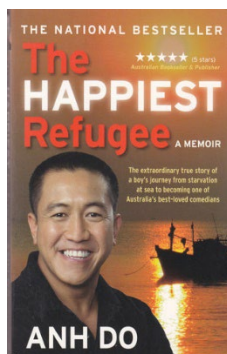
Eddie Jaku always considered himself a German first, a Jew second. He was proud of his country. But all of that changed in November 1938, when he was beaten, arrested and taken to a concentration camp.

Over the next seven years, Eddie faced unimaginable horrors every day, first in Buchenwald, then in Auschwitz, then on a Nazi death march. He lost family, friends, his country.

Because he survived, Eddie made the vow to smile every day. He pays tribute to those who were lost by telling his story, sharing his wisdom and living his best possible life. He now believes he is the 'happiest man on earth'. Published as Eddie turns 100, this is a powerful, heartbreaking and ultimately hopeful memoir of how happiness can be found even in the darkest of times.

Themes: Autobiography, Holocaust, World War II

Want to read



The Happiest Refugee - Anh Do

Biography

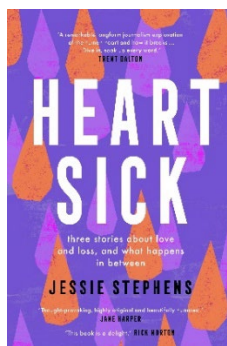
(232 pages) (MP3, Large Print, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Anh Do nearly didn't make it to Australia. His entire family came close to losing their lives on the sea as they escaped from war-torn Vietnam in an overcrowded boat. But nothing - not murderous pirates, nor the imminent threat of death by hunger, disease or dehydration as they drifted for days - could quench their desire to make a better life in the country they had dreamed about. Life in Australia was hard, an endless succession of back-breaking work, crowded rooms, ruthless landlords and make-do everything. But there was a loving extended family, and always friends and play and something to laugh about for Anh, his brother Khoa and their sister Tram.

The Happiest Refugee tells the incredible, uplifting and inspiring life story of one of our favourite personalities. Tragedy, humour, heartache and unswerving determination - a big life with big dreams. Anh's story will move and amuse all who read it.

Themes: Refugees, memoir, Australia

Want to read



Heartsick - Jessie Stephens

Non-Fiction

(336 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

'Heartbreak does not seem to be a brand of grief we respect. And so, we are left in the middle of the ocean, floating in a dinghy with no anchor, while the world waits for us to be okay again.'

Claire has returned from London to the dust and familiarity of her childhood home, only to realise something is wrong with her partner Maggie. Patrick is a lonely uni student, until he meets Caitlin - but does she feel as connected as he does? Ana is happily married with three children. Then, one night, she falls in love with someone else. Based on three true stories, Heartsick is a compelling narrative nonfiction account of the many lows and occasional surprising highs of heartbreak. Bruising, beautiful, achingly specific but wholeheartedly universal, it reminds us that emotional pain can make us as it breaks us, and that storytelling has the ultimate healing power.

Themes: Romance, mental health, relationships

Want to read



Hope Street, Jerusalem - Iris Makler

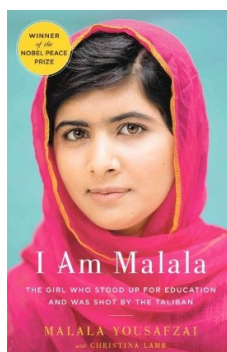
Memoir

(313 pages)

'I had no idea how demanding this consuming, cruel, dangerous and fascinating place would be. I would fall in love here, I would do some of my best reporting, I would be injured, ending my run of good luck - my life would change dramatically ...' Moving to a strange city always takes courage, but never more so than in a place where the daily expression of love and hate can turn a simple choice of a romantic table by the window into a life or death decision. Both a love story and bittersweet tribute to her beloved adopted city of Jerusalem, Iris Makler shines a hopeful light on a part of the world where the news reports often makes it seem impossibly dark. From juggling the danger and unpredictability of her work as a roving foreign correspondent, covering everything from Palestinian suicide attacks to Israeli incursions into the West Bank, to falling in love with a handsome and charming young Israeli, and gaining a mischievous four-legged companion along the way, she allows us an intimate glimpse into a passionate, vibrant and fascinating world. Adventurous, compassionate and engagingly honest, the award-winning author of OUR WOMAN IN KABUL is a master at capturing the personal stories behind the news we really want to know - and her story is the most interesting of all

Themes: Middle East, media and journalists, courage and hope

Want to read



I am Malala - Malala Yousafzai

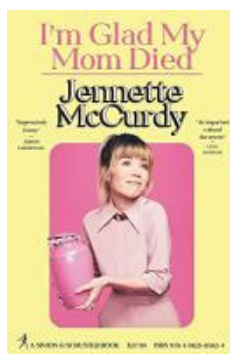
Biography

(327 pages)

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive. Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she became a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize. I AM MALALA is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons. I AM MALALA will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world.

Themes: Feminism, education, history, politics

Want to read



I'm Glad My Mom Died - Jennette McCurdy

Biography

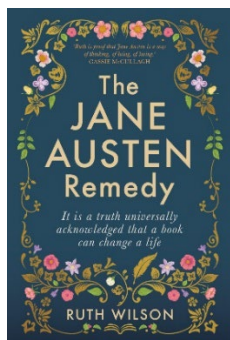
(304 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



Jennette McCurdy was six years old when she had her first acting audition. Her mother's dream was for her only daughter to become a star, and Jennette would do anything to make her mother happy. So she went along with what Mom called "calorie restriction," eating little and weighing herself five times a day. She endured extensive at-home makeovers while Mom chided, "Your eyelashes are invisible, okay? You think Dakota Fanning doesn't tint hers?" She was even showered by Mom until age sixteen while sharing her diaries, email, and all her income. In *I'm Glad My Mom Died*, Jennette recounts all this in unflinching detail—just as she chronicles what happens when the dream finally comes true. Cast in a new Nickelodeon series called *iCarly*, she is thrust into fame. Though Mom is ecstatic, emailing fan club moderators and getting on a first-name basis with the paparazzi ("Hi Gale!"), Jennette is riddled with anxiety, shame, and self-loathing, which manifest into eating disorders, addiction, and a series of unhealthy relationships. These issues only get worse when, soon after taking the lead in the *iCarly* spinoff *Sam & Cat* alongside Ariana Grande, her mother dies of cancer. Finally, after discovering therapy and quitting acting, Jennette embarks on recovery and decides for the first time in her life what she really wants

Themes: Eating disorders, mental illness, mothers and daughters, child actors

Want to read



The Jane Austen Remedy - Ruth Wilson

Biography

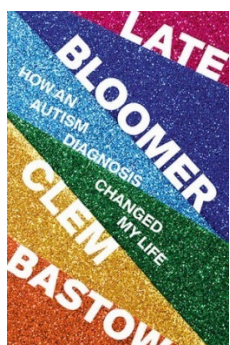
(320 pages) (e-Book available)



As she approached the age of seventy, Ruth Wilson began to have recurring dreams about losing her voice. Unable to dismiss her feelings of unexplainable sadness, she made the radical decision to retreat from her conventional life with her husband to a sunshine-yellow cottage in the Southern Highlands where she lived alone for the next decade. Ruth had fostered a lifelong love of reading, and from the moment she first encountered *Pride and Prejudice* in the 1940s she had looked to Jane Austen's heroines as her models for the sort of woman she wanted to become. As Ruth settled into her cottage, she resolved to re-read Austen's six novels and rediscover the heroines who had inspired her; to read between the lines of both the novels and her own life. And as she read, she began to reclaim her voice. Published the year Ruth turns ninety, it is an inspirational account of the lessons learned from Jane Austen over nearly eight decades, as well as a timely reminder that it's never too late to seize a second chance.

Themes: Books about books, women, Australia, Jane Austen

Want to read



Late Bloomer: How an Autism Diagnosis Changed my Life - Clem Bastow

Biography

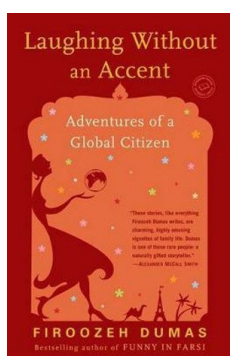
(272 pages) (MP3 and e-Book available)



Clem Bastow grew up feeling like she'd missed a key memo on human behaviour. She found the unspoken rules of social engagement confusing, arbitrary and often stressful. Friendships were hard, relationships harder, and the office was a fluorescent-lit nightmare of anxiety. It wasn't until Clem was diagnosed as autistic, at age 36, that things clicked into focus. The obsession with sparkly things and dinosaurs. The encyclopaedic knowledge of popular music. The meltdowns that would come on like a hurricane. The ability to write eloquently while conquering basic maths was like trying to understand ancient Greek. These weren't just 'personality quirks' but autistic traits that shaped Clem's life in powerful ways. With wit and warmth, Clem reflects as an autistic adult on her formative experiences as an undiagnosed young person, from the asphalt playground of St Joseph's Primary School in Melbourne to working as an entertainment journalist in Hollywood. She challenges the broader cultural implications and ideas around autism, especially for women and gender-diverse people.

Themes: Neurodiversity, disability, LGBTQI

Want to read



Laughing Without an Accent - Firoozeh Dumas

Biography

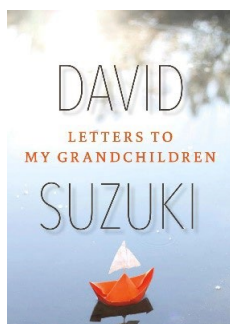
(240 pages)

In the New York Times bestselling memoir *Funny in Farsi*, Firoozeh Dumas recounted her adventures growing up Iranian American in Southern California. Now she again mines her rich Persian heritage in *Laughing Without an Accent*, sharing stories both tender and humorous on being a citizen of the world, on her well-meaning family, and on amusing cultural conundrums, all told with insights into the universality of the human condition. (Hint: It may have to do with brushing and flossing daily.)

With dry wit and a bold spirit, Dumas puts her own unique mark on the themes of family, community, and tradition. She braves the uncommon palate of her French-born husband and learns the nuances of having her book translated for Persian audiences (the censors edit out all references to ham). And along the way, she reconciles her beloved Iranian customs with her Western ideals.

Themes: Travel, family, humour

Want to read



Letters to my Grandchildren - David Suzuki

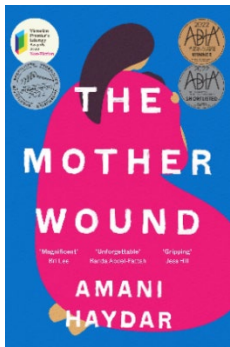
Biography

(176 pages)

In these inspiring letters to his grandchildren, David Suzuki speaks passionately about their future. He challenges them to speak out and act on their beliefs, explains why sports are important, decries the lack of elders and grandparents in the lives of many people, especially immigrants, and champions the importance of heroes. The most personal of his books, *Letters to My Grandchildren* includes stories from Suzuki's own remarkable life—such as how he spent summers harvesting potatoes and celery as a child to make money for his family and why he has always preferred to work in radio rather than TV. He also provides an intimate look at his life as a father and grandfather and writes moving individual letters to each of his six grandchildren, including letters to his two Haida grandchildren about the importance of their First Nations heritage. And he speaks candidly and eloquently about old age and death. As he ponders life's deepest questions and offers up a lifetime of wisdom, Suzuki inspires us all to live with courage, conviction, and passion.

Themes: Science, philosophy, Canadian history and culture

Want to read



The Mother Wound - Amani Haydar

Biography

(352 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

'I am from a family of strong women.' Amani Haydar suffered the unimaginable when she lost her mother in a brutal act of domestic violence perpetrated by her father. Five months pregnant at the time, her own perception of how she wanted to mother (and how she had been mothered) was shaped by this devastating murder.

After her mother's death, Amani began reassessing everything she knew of her parents' relationship. They had been unhappy for so long - should she have known that it would end like this? A lawyer by profession, she also saw the holes in the justice system for addressing and combating emotional abuse and coercive control. Amani also had to reckon with the weight of familial and cultural context. Her parents were brought together in an arranged marriage, her mother thirteen years her father's junior. Her grandmother was brutally killed in the 2006 war in Lebanon, adding complex layers of intergenerational trauma. Writing with grace and beauty, this is a story of female resilience and the role of motherhood in the home and in the world. In *The Mother Wound*, Amani uses her own strength to help other survivors find their voices.

Themes: Feminism, crime, grief, and trauma

Want to read



My Father and Other Animals - Sam Vincent

Memoir

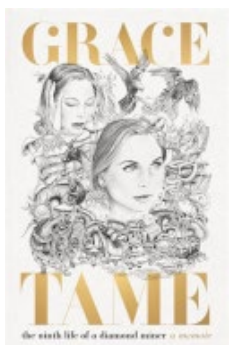
(304 pages) (e-Book available)

Sam Vincent is a twenty-something writer in the inner suburbs, scrabbling to make ends meet, when he gets a call from his mother - his father has stuck his hand in a woodchipper, but 'not to worry - it wasn't like that scene in *Fargo* or anything'. When Sam returns to the family farm in the Yass Valley of New South Wales to help out, his life takes a new and unexpected direction.

Whether castrating a calf or buying a bull - or knocking in a hundred fence posts by hand when his dad hides the post-driver - Sam's farming apprenticeship is an education in grit and shit. But there are victories, too - nurturing a fig orchard to bloom; learning to read the land; joining forces with Indigenous elders to protect a special site. Slowly, Sam finds himself thinking differently about the farm, about his father and about his relationship with both.

Themes: Family, agriculture, legacy, humour

Want to read



The Ninth Life of a Diamond Miner: A Memoir - Grace Tame

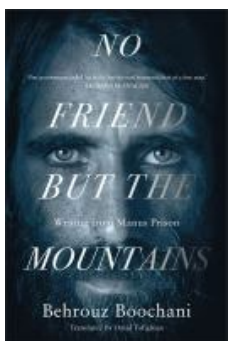
Memoir

(320 pages) (e-Book available)

Grace Tame has never walked on middle ground. From a young age, her life was defined by uncertainty - by trauma and strength, sadness and hope, terrible lows and wondrous highs. As a teenager she found the courage to speak up after experiencing awful and ongoing child sexual abuse. This fight to find her voice would not be her last. In 2021 Grace stepped squarely into the public eye as the Australian of the Year, and was the catalyst for a tidal wave of conversation and action. Australians from all walks of life were inspired and moved by her fire and passion. She was using her voice and encouraging others to use theirs too. *The Ninth Life of a Diamond Miner* is Grace's story, in Grace's words, on Grace's terms. Here she returns, again and again, to the things that have driven and saved her: love, connection and radical, unwavering honesty. Like *Grace*, this book is sharply intelligent, deeply felt, wildly unexpected and often blisteringly funny. And, as with all her work, it offers a constructive and optimistic vision for a better future for all of us.

Themes: Childhood sexual abuse, trauma, advocacy, media

Want to read



No Friend but the Mountains - Behrouz Boochani

Biography

(374 pages) (MP3 and e-Book available)

Where have I come from? From the land of rivers, the land of waterfalls, the land of ancient chants, the land of mountains. In 2013, Kurdish journalist Behrouz Boochani was illegally detained on Manus Island. He has been there ever since. People would run to the mountains to escape the warplanes and found asylum within their chestnut forests. This book is the result.

Laboriously tapped out on a mobile phone and translated from the Farsi, it is a voice of witness, an act of survival. A lyric first-hand account. A cry of resistance. A vivid portrait through six years of incarceration and exile. Do Kurds have any friends other than the mountains?

Themes: Trauma, oppression, Christmas Island

Want to read



Oh Miriam!: stories from an extraordinary life - Miriam Margolyes

Biography

(323 pages)

From declaring my love to Vanessa Redgrave to being fed cockroaches by Steve Buscemi, from turnip-based comedy with Blackadder to being farted on by Arnold Schwarzenegger, from Graham Norton's sofa to Alan Cumming's camper van, my life has been (and continues to be) an uproarious adventure. *Oh Miriam!* has been such a constant refrain in my life, said in all kinds of tones - laughs, surprised gasps and orgasmic sighs (I'm hoping for all of those from you as you read on!) - that it had to be the title of this book. And with a cast list that stretches from Churchill to DiCaprio, Dahl to Dietrich, Princess Margaret to Maggie Smith, I've so much more to tell you and so much more to say.

My chapters range from 'How to Stay Married' to 'Don't Let the Bastards Get You Down'. Discover how to break the thickest conversational ice; why swearing is actually good for you (though not on the *Today* programme); the unexpected things I learned at school and what my Spice Girl name would be. Not to mention my Tale of the Unexpected and my very own Vagina Monologue. Buckle up and join me on another unforgettable adventure...

Themes: Humour, television and theatre, eccentric

Want to read



One Last Dance - Emma Jane Holmes

Memoir

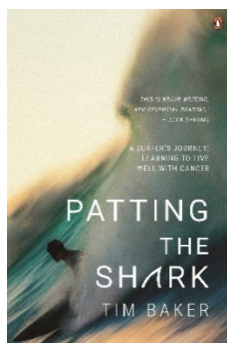
(368 pages)

Emma Jane Holmes had her dream job, working in the funeral industry, caring for those who could no longer care for themselves. But when the bills mounted after her marriage breakdown, she turned to her other dream - dancing on stage as a showgirl - and her glittering alter ego Madison was born. Emma Jane kept Madison a secret. Madison kept Emma Jane an even bigger one.

But what happens when death touches the neon world of the strip club? And sex - in the form of a cute co-worker - encroaches on the funeral home? Could the answer be life, lived in the day, because that's the only day you have?

Themes: Death care industry, funeral homes, striptease

[Want to read](#)



Patting the Shark - Tim Baker

Memoir

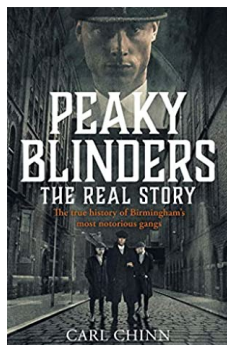
(384 pages)

A surfer's journey learning to live well with cancer. Tim Baker was living the dream. A best-selling and award-winning surf writer with a beautiful family, a lifetime of exotic travel and a home walking distance to quality waves. That all changed on July 7, 2015, when he was diagnosed, out of the blue, with stage 4, metastatic prostate cancer. So began a descent into the debilitating world of aggressive cancer treatments and a fight for a survival as brutal as any big wave hold down.

Tim writes candidly and with a raw vulnerability about this perilous journey through chemotherapy, hormone therapy, radiation and surgery, and his own determined lifestyle strategies to maintain mind, body and spirit. Happily, surfing provided one of his most powerful forms of therapy and writing about his experiences has proven deeply cathartic.

Themes: Mortality, surfing, cancer

[Want to read](#)



Peaky Blinders: The Real Story - Carl Chinn

True Crime

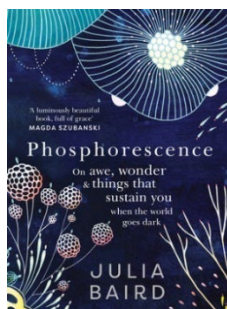
(288 pages) [\(e-Audiobook available\)](#)

A fascinating insight into the true story behind Birmingham's most notorious gangs, The Peaky Blinders.

Drawing together a remarkably wide-range of original sources, including rarely seen images of real Peaky Blinders and interviews with relatives of the 1920s gangsters, *Peaky Blinders: The Real Story* adds a new dimension to the true history of Birmingham's underworld and fact behind its fiction.

Themes: True crime, Birmingham, 19th Century English history

[Want to read](#)



Phosphorescence - Julia Baird

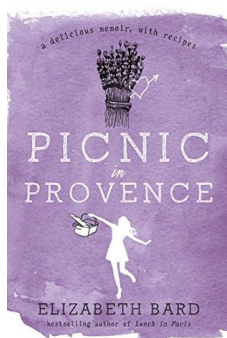
Non-Fiction

(320 pages) [\(MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available\)](#)

Over the last decade, we have become better at knowing what brings us contentment, well-being and joy. We know, for example, that there are a few core truths to science of happiness. We know that being kind and altruistic makes us happy, that turning off devices, talking to people, forging relationships, living with meaning and delving into the concerns of others offer our best chance at achieving happiness. But how do we retain happiness? It often slips out of our hands as quickly as we find it. So, when we are exposed to, or learn, good things, how do we continue to burn with them? And more than that, when our world goes dark, when we're overwhelmed by illness or heartbreak, loss or pain, how do we survive, stay alive or even bloom? In the muck and grit of a daily existence full of disappointments and a disturbing lack of control over many of the things that matter most - finite relationships, fragile health, fraying economies, a planet in peril - how do we find, nurture and carry our own inner, living light - a light to ward off the darkness?

Themes: Memoir, religion, feminism, wellness, self-help

[Want to read](#)



Picnic in Provence: A Memoir with Recipes - Elizabeth Bard

Biography

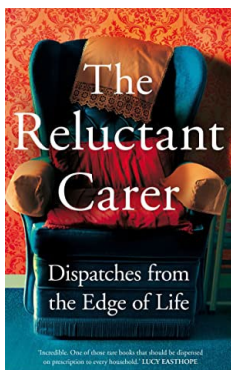
(384 pages) [\(e-Book available\)](#)

Ten years ago, New Yorker Elizabeth Bard followed a handsome Frenchman up a spiral staircase to a love nest in the heart of Paris. Now, with a baby on the way and the world's flakiest croissant around the corner, Elizabeth is sure she's found her "forever place." But life has other plans.

On a last romantic jaunt before the baby arrives, the couple take a trip to the tiny Provencal village of Céreste. A chance encounter leads them to the wartime home of a famous poet, a tale of a buried manuscript and a garden full of heirloom roses. Under the spell of the house and its unique history, in less time than it takes to flip a crepe, Elizabeth and Gwendal decide to move-lock, stock and Le Creuset-to the French countryside. Filled with enticing recipes for stuffed zucchini flowers, fig tart and honey & thyme ice cream, *Picnic in Provence* is the story of everything that happens after the happily ever after.

Themes: Travel, food, cooking, France

[Want to read](#)



The Reluctant Carer: Dispatches from the Edge of Life

Non-Fiction

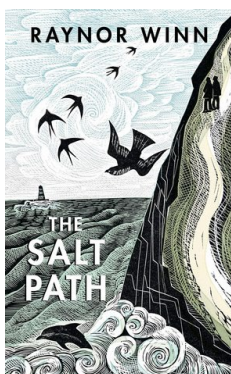
(320 pages)

It was the kind of phone call we all dread. Your elderly father has been admitted to hospital. He's not well and he needs your help. Your mum is about to be left at home alone. She needs you too. The answer? Simple. Drop everything. Go. Just be there. Just help. The reality? Not so straightforward. Suddenly, you're a kid again, stranded in the overheated house you grew up in. They need you 24/7, that much is obvious. And you want to help, of course you do. But soon your life starts to unravel almost as quickly as their health.

In between bouts of washing, feeding, cooking and fighting there are days that test you, days where everything goes wrong and days where everyone, miraculously rises to the occasion. And in between all of that, you learn how to care. But this time with feeling.

Themes: Ageing, aged care, elderly parents, informal care, humour

Want to read



The Salt Path - Raynor Winn

Non-Fiction

(288 pages) (e-Audiobook available)

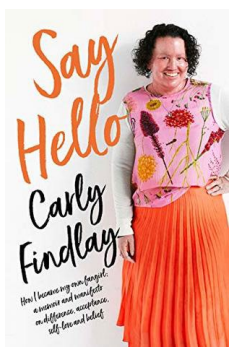
Just days after Raynor learns that Moth, her husband of 32 years, is terminally ill, their home and livelihood is taken away. With nothing left and little time, they make the brave and impulsive decision to walk the 630 miles of the sea-swept South West Coast Path, from Somerset to Dorset, via Devon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

They have almost no money for food or shelter and must carry only the essentials for survival on their backs as 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.

Themes: Marriage, terminal illness, Great Britain

Want to read



Say Hello - Carly Findlay

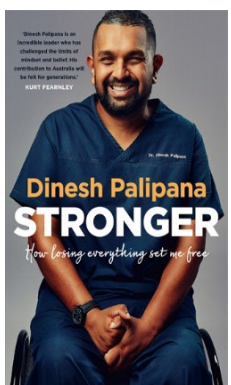
Non-Fiction

(336 pages) (MP3 available)

'In fairytales, the characters who look different are often cast as the villain or monsters. It's only when they shed their unconventional skin that they are seen as "good" or less frightening. There are very few stories where the character that looks different is the hero of the story ... I've been the hero of my story - telling it on my own terms, proud about my facial difference and disability, not wanting a cure for my rare, severe and sometimes confronting skin condition, and knowing that I am beautiful even though I don't have beauty privilege.' This honest, outspoken and thought-provoking memoir by award-winning writer and appearance activist Carly Findlay will challenge all your assumptions and beliefs about what it is like to have a visibly different appearance. Carly lives with a rare skin condition, Ichthyosis, and what she faces every day, and what she has to live with, will have you cheering for her and her courage and irrepressible spirit. This is both a moving memoir and a proud manifesto on disability and appearance diversity issues.

Themes: Ichthyosis, disability, memoir

Want to read



Stronger - Dinesh Palipana

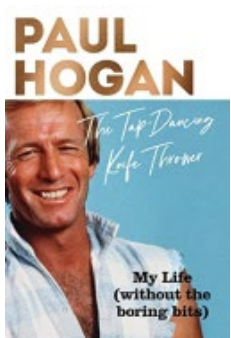
Biography

(415 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

A puddle of water on a highway changed Dinesh Palipana's life forever. Halfway through medical school, Dinesh was involved in a catastrophic car accident that caused a cervical spinal cord injury. After his accident, his strength and determination saw him return to complete medical school - now with quadriplegia. Dinesh was the first quadriplegic medical intern in Queensland, and the second person with quadriplegia to graduate medical school in Australia. Despite all of the pain and hardship he's faced, Dinesh now sees his accident as a turning point for the better in his life. He believes it has made him a better doctor, with a better grasp of the concerns and fears of his patients, and a more sensitive, open human. He fights for equal and equitable access for disabled people, and is a compassionate and skilled doctor working in one of Australia's busiest hospitals. After everything he's been through, Dinesh believes he is now happier, stronger and more capable than he was before the accident. It helped him to clarify what is important in his life, and taught him that happiness and strength can always be found within.

Themes: Emergency physician, traffic accidents, positivity

Want to read



The Tap-Dancing Knife Thrower - Paul Hogan

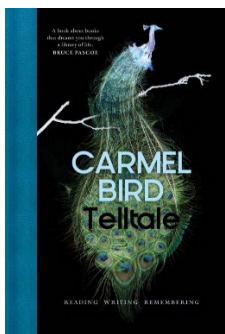
Biography

(348 pages)

Paul Hogan first appeared on Australia's screens in 1971 as a 'tap-dancing knife thrower' on TV talent show New Faces. The then father of four and Sydney Harbour Bridge rigger from Granville did it as a dare, but when the network's switchboard lit up, he was invited back. So popular was he with viewers, Hogan became a regular on Mike Willesee's A Current Affair. The rest, as they say, is history. In collaboration with his business partner and best friend, John Cornell (who played his sidekick, Strop), 'Hoges' went on to become Australia's favourite TV comedian. His hugely popular comedy shows and appearances in unforgettable and ground-breaking ads for cigarettes, beer and tourism, came to personify Australia and Australians here and overseas, helping to change the perception of who we are as people and as a nation. The Tap-Dancing Knife Thrower is a funny and candid account of the astonishing life of this 'lucky bastard', as Hoges describes himself. Full of stories never previously shared, and recounted in the comedian's inimitable, funny and self-deprecating style, The Tap-Dancing Knife Thrower is Paul Hogan's story told his way - 'without the boring bits'.

Themes: Australia, TV personality, humour

Want to read



Telltale: Reading Writing Remembering - Carmel Bird

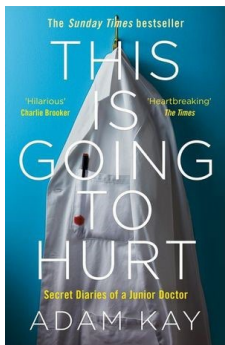
Biography

(288 pages)

In Telltale, Carmel Bird seizes on the enforced isolation of the pandemic to re-read a rich dispensary of books from her past. A rule she sets herself is that she can consult only the books in her house, even if some, such as the much-loved Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, appear to be stubbornly elusive. Her library is comprehensive, and each book chosen – or that cannot be refused – enables an opening, a connection to people, time, place, myth, image, and the experience of a writing life. From her father's bomb shelter to her mother's raspberry jam, from a lost Georgian public library with 'narrow little streets of books' to the memory of crossing by bridge the turbulent waters of the Tamar River, to a revelatory picnic at Tasmania's Cataract Gorge in 1945, this is the most intimate of memoirs. It is one that never shies from the horrors of world history, the treatment of First Nations People, or the literary misrepresentations of the past.

Themes: Pandemic, Australia, writing

Want to read



This is Going to Hurt: Secret Diaries of a Junior Doctor - Adam Kay

Memoir

(279 pages) (e-Audiobook available)

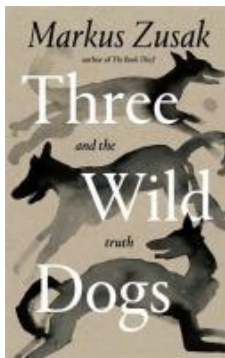
Welcome to 97-hour weeks. Welcome to life and death decisions. Welcome to a constant tsunami of bodily fluids. Welcome to earning less than the hospital parking meter. Wave goodbye to your friends and relationships...

Welcome to the life of a junior doctor.

Scribbled in secret after endless days, sleepless nights and missed weekends, comedian and former junior doctor Adam Kay's *This Is Going to Hurt* provides a no-holds-barred account of his time on the NHS front line. Hilarious, horrifying and heartbreaking by turns, these diaries are everything you wanted to know - and more than a few things you didn't - about life on and off the hospital ward. And yes, it may leave a scar.

Themes: Medicine, healthcare, humour, work

Want to read



Three Wild Dogs and the Truth - Markus Zusak

Biography

(223 pages)

There's a madman dog beside me, and the hounds of memory ahead of us. It's love and beasts and wild mistakes, and regret, but never to change things... What happens when the Zusaks open their family home to three big, wild, pound-hardened dogs - Reuben, a wolf at your door with a hacksaw; Archer, blond, beautiful, deadly; and the rancorously smiling Frosty, who walks like a rolling thunderstorm? The answer can only be chaos: there are street fights, park fights, public shamings, property trashing, bodily injuries, stomach pumping, purest comedy, shocking tragedy, and carnage that needs to be seen to be believed ... not to mention the odd police visit at some ungodly hour of the morning. There is a reckoning of shortcomings and failure, a strengthening of will, but most important of all, an explosion of love - and the joy and recognition of family. From one of the world's great storytellers comes a tender, motley and exquisitely written memoir about the human need for both connection and disorder; a love letter to the animals who bring hilarity and beauty - but also the visceral truth of the natural world - straight to our doors and into our lives, and change us forever.

Themes: Family and relationships, dogs, anecdotes

Want to read



Time of My Life - Myf Warhurst

Biography

(320 pages)

We all have a soundtrack to our lives, songs that as soon as we hear them we're transported to a moment in time. As the youngest child, and only girl, in a family of creative types, Myf Warhurst grew up with the music in her. Whether she was watching Daryl Braithwaite on TV on a Sunday night or listening to the crackle of the needle across vinyl as Agnetha and Anni-Frid took her from rural Victoria to Eurovision, music has always shaped Myf's life. Later her love of music (and the realisation that a professional pianist gig wasn't part of the plan) would shape her career. But music isn't just about memories. It's a safe place for people who feel different. Songs and lyrics helped Myf make sense of the world and deal with heartbreak and uncertainty. Music steered her hopes and fashion choices, cemented friendships and bonded family. In *Time of My Life* she shares funny, fabulous and occasionally fraught tales about growing up in a small country town with an unhealthy obsession with Countdown, then working in Australian radio and her experiences on the much-loved music quiz show *Spicks & Specks*. She spills the backstage beans on work, fame, feminism, failure, love and success. Like a sommelier matches food with wine, Myf matches hits with memory, and in the process reminds us all that, as Louis Armstrong said, 'Music is life itself.'

Themes: Music, humour, Australian radio and TV, feminism

Want to read



Tiny: A memoir about love, letting go and a very small house - Louise Southerden

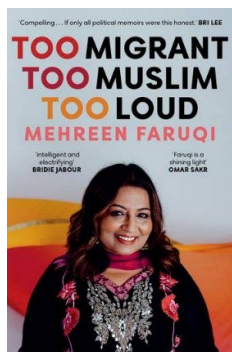
Memoir

(262 pages)

Tiny is a memoir by award-winning travel writer Louise Southerden about her quest to create a simpler way of life by building her very own tiny house. In her successful career as a travel writer, Louise found herself staying in ever new and exotic locations, but while staying in a cabin in Norway, she had an epiphany about what she truly wanted for her life, ready to put down roots. With no prior building experience, Louise decided to build a tiny house with her partner, Max, which tested an already unstable relationship. Over the year and a half of planning and construction of her tiny house, Louise witnessed her new home coming together as her relationship was falling apart. Alongside her burgeoning construction skills, Louise learned about love, home, forgiveness and what we really need to be happy. This is an intensely personal story about searching for home and true love, two of life's most fundamental needs, risking everything, failing and finding ways to cope, and discovering that what we need isn't always what we thought we wanted.

Themes: Construction and tiny houses, Australian, self-actualisation

Want to read



Too Migrant, Too Muslim, Too Loud - Mehreen Faruqi

Memoir

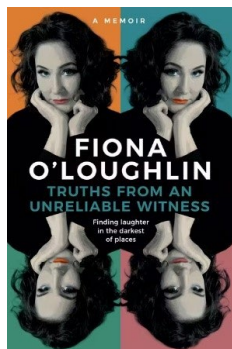
(304 pages) (e-Book available)

A no-holds-barred memoir and outspoken manifesto from Senator, role model, and modern Australian hero Mehreen Faruqi. Too Migrant, Too Muslim, Too Loud is a no-holds-barred memoir and manifesto from outspoken senator, troublemaker and multicultural icon Mehreen Faruqi. As the first Muslim woman in any Australian parliament, Mehreen has a unique and crucial perspective on our politics and democracy. It is a tale of a political outsider fighting for her right and the rights of others like her to be let inside on their terms.

From her beginnings in Pakistan and remaking in Australia, Mehreen recounts her struggle to navigate two vastly different, changing worlds without losing herself. This moving and inspiring memoir shares shattering insights learned as a migrant, an engineer, an activist, a feminist, and a politician.

Themes: *Feminism, politics, culture*

Want to read



Truths from an Unreliable Witness - Fiona O'Loughlin

Memoir

(307 pages)

Fiona O'Loughlin was raised in the generation of children who were to be seen, but not heard ... unless there were guests in the house. Then she'd watch everyone, telling stories, making each other laugh. This was where she discovered the rhythm of stories and the lubrication that alcohol lent the telling. Years later, as a mum of five, Fiona would become one of Australia's most-loved comedians, performing gigs in New York, Montreal, Singapore, London, Toronto and Edinburgh. Fiona looked like she was living her dream - but she was hiding a secret in open sight, using alcoholism as material for her comedy and using comedy as an excuse for her alcoholism. A fiercely honest and wryly funny. It is about hitting rock bottom and then realising you are only halfway down. Ultimately, it's about hanging on to your last straw of sanity and finding laughter in the darkest of times. You may want to sit down for this...

Themes: *Comedy, drugs and alcoholism, loss*

Want to read



Turns Out I'm Fine - Judith Lucy

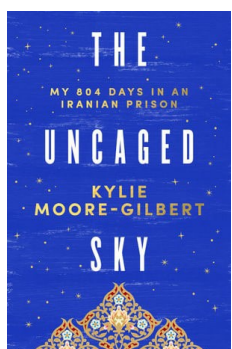
Memoir

(272 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Judith Lucy was just Great! Sure, the last remaining member of her immediate family had died, she was menopausal, she suspected her career was in the shitter and it seemed like the world was going to hell in a handbasket - but she was about to move in with the love of her life! Everything would work out because SHE HAD A MAN. Then, in the space of twenty-four hours, her relationship came apart and so did she. A broken heart became the catalyst for a complete existential melt down. She was nearly fifty, suddenly alone and unsure about every aspect of her life. How had this happened? Should she blame one of her four parents? What part had the comedy world played and was her disastrous history with men about more than just bad taste? In her most candid and insightful book yet, Judith figures out what went wrong and then turns her attention to finding out what her life might look like if it went right. She tries everything from dating a tree to getting a portrait of her vulva done to swimming with a whale shark. Thanks to a series of revelations and a slight drowning experience, Judith starts to realise that despite death, heartache and a dry vagina it turns out ... she's fine.

Themes: *Humour, feminism, relationships*

Want to read



The Uncaged Sky - Kylie Moore-Gilbert

Memoir

(406 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

On 12 September 2018 British-Australian academic Dr Kylie Moore-Gilbert was arrested at Tehran Airport by Iran's feared Islamic Revolutionary Guards. Convicted of espionage in a shadowy trial presided over by Iran's most notorious judge, she was given a 10 year sentence and ultimately spent 804 days incarcerated in Tehran's Evin and Qarchak prisons. Held in a filthy solitary confinement cell for months, and subjected to relentless interrogation, Kylie was pushed to her limits by extreme physical and psychological deprivation. Her only lifeline was the covert friendships she made with other prisoners inside the maximum-security compound, communicating through the air vents between cells, and by hiding secret letters in the narrow outdoor balcony where she was led, blindfolded, for an hour each day. To survive, Kylie began to fight back. Multiple hunger strikes, co-ordinated protests and a daring escape attempt led to her transfer to the isolated desert prison, Qarchak, to live among dangerous convicted criminals. On 25 November 2020, after more than two years of struggle, Kylie was finally released in a high-stakes three-nation prisoner-swap deal.

Themes: *Iran, imprisonment, political prisoners*

Want to read



Unknown: A Refugee's Story - Akuch Kuol Anyieth

Biography

(319 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

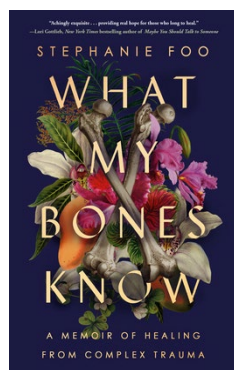
In 1996, when Akuch Kuol Anyieth is five, her mother flees to Kakuma with her children, intent on finding safety and freedom for her family, while her husband stays behind in South Sudan to fight in the civil war. The family spends nine years in the camp, eking out an existence amidst famine, disease, unbearable heat, and chronic violence. Despite their suffering, Akuch never loses hope or her sense of humour. She's a bright student who loves learning and does well at the local school.

In 2005, the family is finally granted a family humanitarian visa to Australia. They are on the way to paradise. But the reality of their new lives in Melbourne is complex. As Akuch's brother's behaviour spirals out of control, the family find themselves isolated and struggling with various forms of racism.

Akuch Kuol Anyieth's Unknown is a remarkable memoir. It's a homage to the strength of her mother in protecting her family against all the odds, a story of sadness, anger, humour, determination, survival, and love.

Themes: *South Sudanese refugees, Australia, racism*

Want to read



What My Bones Know - Stephanie Foo

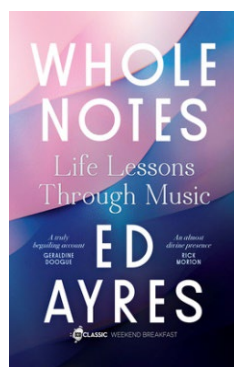
Biography

(352 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

By age thirty, Stephanie Foo was successful on paper: She had her dream job as an award-winning radio producer at This American Life and a loving boyfriend. But behind her office door, she was having panic attacks and sobbing at her desk every morning. After years of questioning what was wrong with herself, she was diagnosed with complex PTSD. Both of Foo's parents abandoned her when she was a teenager, after years of physical and verbal abuse and neglect. She thought she'd moved on, but her new diagnosis illuminated the way her past continued to threaten her health, relationships, and career. She found limited resources to help her, so Foo set out to heal herself. Foo interviews scientists and psychologists and tries a variety of innovative therapies. She returns to her hometown of San Jose, California, to investigate the effects of immigrant trauma on the community, and she uncovers family secrets in the country of her birth, Malaysia, to learn how trauma can be inherited through generations.

Themes: Post-traumatic stress disorder, trauma, mental health, mind and body

Want to read



Whole Notes - Eddie Ayres

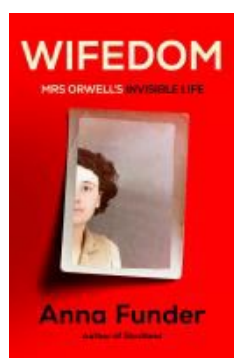
Biography

(305 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

How can we pause long enough to repair ourselves? How can we make space and time in our lives to know ourselves? One way is through music - learning music, listening to music, being open to music. Because music consoles and restores us. Through music, whether we are listening or playing, we know ourselves more intimately, more honestly, and more clearly with every note. And with every note, music offers us a hand to the beyond. Through music, we can say what we didn't even know we felt. This book is an ode to music, and a celebration of humanity's greatest creation. It is not a call to arms, but a call to instruments. In music, Ed Ayres finds answers to the big questions life throws at us. Using personal anecdotes - including those relating to his transition from Emma to Ed - and observations from teaching and learning music, Ed finds hope in our desire to become whole, with some simple music lessons along the way.

Themes: Music, memoir, transgender men

Want to read



Wifedom - Anna Funder

Biography

(464 pages) (MP3 and e-Audiobook available)

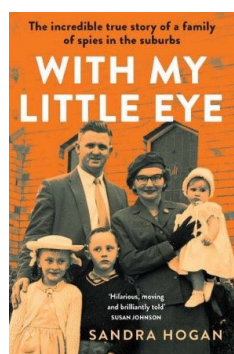
Looking for wonder and some reprieve from the everyday, Anna Funder slips into the pages of her hero George Orwell. As she watches him create his writing self, she tries to remember her own...

When she uncovers his forgotten wife, it's a revelation. Eileen O'Shaughnessy's literary brilliance shaped Orwell's work and her practical nous saved his life. But why - and how - was she written out of the story?

Using newly discovered letters from Eileen to her best friend, Funder recreates the Orwells' marriage, through the Spanish Civil War and WW II in London. As she rolls up the screen concealing Orwell's private life she is led to question what it takes to be a writer - and what it is to be a wife.

Themes: marriage, books about books, George Orwell, patriarchy and feminism

Want to read



With My Little Eye - Sandra Hogan

Biography

(240 pages) (e-Book available)

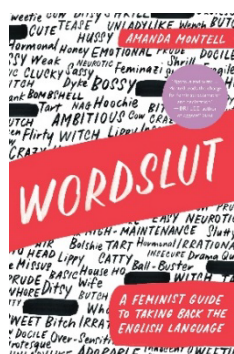
Growing up in the 1950s, the three Doherty children were trained by their parents to memorise car number plates, to spot unusual behaviour on the street and, most important of all, to avoid drawing attention to themselves.

The children became unwitting foot soldiers in Australia's battle against Soviet infiltration in the Cold War. They attended political rallies, stood watch on houses owned by communist sympathisers, and insinuated themselves into the UFO Society. In 1956 the Doherty family went on a beach holiday with Vladimir and Evdokia Petrov, the famous Soviet defectors, who were hiding from Soviet assassins.

Dudley and Joan Doherty swore their children to secrecy, and for decades, they didn't even discuss among themselves the work they did for ASIO. With My Little Eye is a poignant and very funny account of a peculiar childhood in 1950s suburban Australia.

Themes: True crime, Australian history, communism

Want to read



Wordslut: A Feminist Guide to Taking back... - Amanda Montell

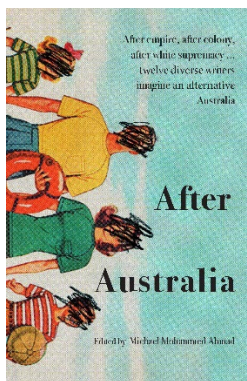
Nonfiction

(291 pages) (e-Audiobook available)

The word "bitch" conjures many images for many people but is most often meant to describe an unpleasant woman. Even before its usage to mean a female canine, bitch didn't refer to gender at all—it originated as a gender-neutral word meaning genitalia. A perfectly innocuous word devolving into a female insult is the case for tons more terms, including hussy, which simply meant "housewife," or slut, which meant "untidy" and was also used to describe men. These words are just a few among history's many English slurs hurled at women. Amanda Montell, feminist linguist and staff features editor at online beauty and health magazine Byrdie.com, deconstructs language—from insults and cursing to grammar and pronunciation patterns—to reveal the ways it has been used for centuries to keep women from gaining equality. Ever wonder why so many people are annoyed when women use the word "like" as a filler? Or why certain gender neutral terms stick and others don't? Or even how linguists have historically discussed women's speech patterns? Wordslut is no stuffy academic study; Montell's irresistible humor shines through, making linguistics not only approachable but both downright hilarious and profound.

Themes: Feminism and literature, sexism in language, history

Want to read



After Australia - Michael Mohammad Ahmed

Short Stories

(288 pages) (e-Book available)

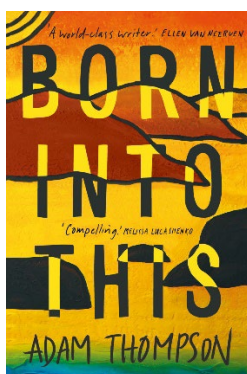
Climate catastrophe, police brutality, white genocide, totalitarian rule and the erasure of black history provide the backdrop for stories of love, courage and hope.

In this unflinching new anthology, twelve of Australia's most daring Indigenous writers and writers of colour provide a glimpse of Australia as we head toward the year 2050.

Featuring Ambelin Kwaymullina, Claire G. Coleman, Omar Sakr, Future D. Fidel, Karen Wyld, Khalid Warsame, Kaya Ortiz, Roanna Gonsalves, Sarah Ross, Zoya Patel, Michelle Law and Hannah Donnelly

Themes: Poetry, science fiction, speculative fiction, climate change

Want to read



Born into This - Adam Thompson

Short Stories

(256 pages)

The stories in Born Into This throw light on a world of unique cultural practice and perspective, from Indigenous rangers trying to instil some pride in wayward urban teens on the harsh islands off the coast of Tasmania to those scraping by on the margins of white society railroaded into complex and compromised decisions. To this mix Adam Thompson manages to bring humour, pathos and occasionally a sly twist as his characters confront racism, untimely funerals, classroom politics and, overhanging all like a discomforting, burgeoning awareness for both white and black Australia, the inexorable damage and disappearance of the remnant natural world.

Themes: Race relations, personal identity, Indigenous peoples

Want to read



Dark as Last Night - Tony Birch

Short stories

(232 pages) (e-Book available)

Dark as Last Night confirms, once again, that Tony Birch is a master of the short story. These exceptional stories capture the importance of human connection at pivotal moments in our lives, whether those occur because of the loss of a loved one or the uncertainties of childhood.

In this collection we witness a young girl struggling to protect her mother from her father's violence, two teenagers clumsily getting to know one another by way of a shared love of music, and a man mourning the death of his younger brother, while beset by memories and regrets from their shared past.

Throughout this powerful collection, Birch's concern for the humanity of those who are often marginalised or overlooked shines bright.

Themes: Australian, marginal communities, grief, racism, domestic violence

Want to read



Dear Son: Letters and Reflections - Thomas Mayor

Anthology

(200 pages) (e-Book available)

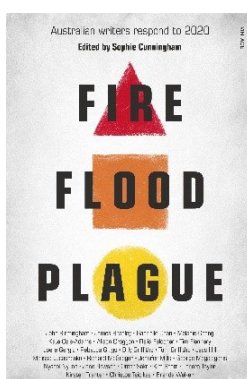
An anthology of heartfelt letters written by First Nations men about life, masculinity, love, culture and racism. Editor Thomas Mayor invites 12 contributors to write a letter to their son or father, bringing together a range of perspectives that offers the greatest celebration of First Nations manhood.

This beautifully designed anthology comes at a time when First Nations peoples are starting to break free of derogatory stereotypes and find solace in their communities and cultures. Yet, each contributor also has one thing in common: they all have a relative who has been terribly wronged – enslaved, raped and dispossessed – because of their Indigenosity.

Featuring letters from Stan Grant, Troy Cassar-Daley, John Little, Charlie King, Joe Williams, Yessie Mosby, Joel Bayliss, Daniel James, Jack Latimore, Daniel Morrison, Tim Sculthorpe and Blak Douglas.

Themes: First Nations, racism, culture

Want to read



Fire Flood Plague - Sophie Cunningham (ed)

Anthology

(288 pages) (MP3 and e-Book available)

2020 began with firestorms raging through the country, followed by floods, and then a global pandemic that has changed how Australians think, feel and live. We all experienced this year differently, but one thing rings true for all of us: this is a year we won't forget. This anthology brings together original work from a diverse collection of Australian voices, from writers to scientists, journalists to historians, all expressing what 2020 meant to them. They write of ash falling from the sky, fish dying on riverbanks, loved ones lost, loved ones reunited, the historical resonance of fire and plague for Indigenous Australians, geopolitical tensions, the changed nature of travel, friendships rekindled on Zoom, the urgency of the Black Lives Matter movement, the state of the arts and the media, the importance of nurturing our inner lives, communities destroyed and communities rebuilding. FIRE FLOOD PLAGUE is a vital cultural record of the resilience and humanity needed in these extraordinary times.

Themes: Essays, environment, climate change, contemporary issues

Want to read



Fourteen Days - Margaret Atwood (ed)

Short Stories

(363 pages) [\(Large Print, MP3 and e-Audiobook available\)](#)

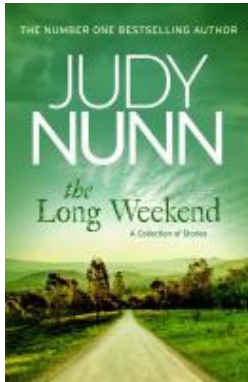
One week into lockdown, the tenants of a Manhattan apartment building have begun to gather on the rooftop each evening and tell stories in this exciting new twist on the novel.

With each passing night, more and more neighbours gather, bringing chairs and milk crates and overturned buckets. Gradually the tenants – some of whom have barely spoken to each other before now – become real neighbours.

With each character secretly written by a different, major literary voice - from Margaret Atwood to John Grisham and Celeste Ng, Fourteen Days is a heart-warming ode to the power of storytelling and human connection.

Themes: Pandemic, books about books, contemporary fiction

[Want to read](#)



The Long weekend - Judy Nunn

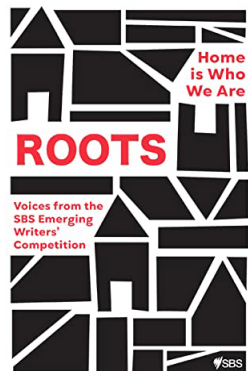
Contemporary Fiction

(304 pages) [\(e-Book available\)](#)

Six short stories from Australia's master storyteller Judy Nunn. The Long Weekend Tracy, Eve, Jet, Mel and Danielle are looking forward – if a little nervously - to their upcoming digital detox. No phones, no laptops – just a quiet weekend in a remote mountain shack. What could go wrong? The Wardrobe When journalist Nancy buys a rundown terrace house she knows nothing about the previous owner - until a discovery in an old wardrobe reveals the lives, loves and losses in the world of Emily Roper. The Otto Bin Empire: Clive's Story To the homeless men and women who gather near the docks, the newly arrived Clive cuts an enigmatic figure. 'I'm just a bloke going through a period of adjustment,' he tells himself, 'I'll be back on my feet soon . . .' Changes As she celebrates her sixty-fifth birthday, actor turned film producer Jackie looks back on her seven decades – and all the many changes in her life. Not least the most recent and most surprising one of all... The House on Hill Street It was such a respectable address - the perfect home for Professor Jameson and his family. But the neighbours are becoming concerned. Eileen Jameson and the boys haven't been seen for quite some time... Just South of Rome On her way to England, actor Jane Prescott makes a quick stopover in Italy. When she stumbles upon the Hotel Visconti, a grand eighteenth-century villa, she has no idea that it will change her life.

Themes: Suspense, history, romance, supernatural and mystery.

[Want to read](#)



Roots: Home Is Who We Are - SBS Emerging Writers' Competition

Non-Fiction

(304 pages)

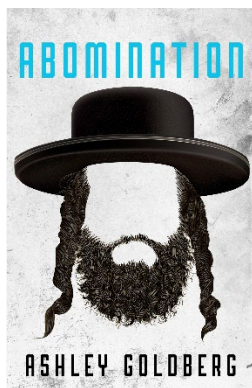
Thirty of the best short memoirs chosen from more than 2000 entries in the inaugural SBS Emerging Writers' Competition.

Offering a snapshot of contemporary Australia, this diverse collection of stories explores love, family, loss, culture, sexual awakening and the abiding connections to people and place that make us who we are. Told with utterly fresh perspectives and a rich vein of literary talent, these stories are an invitation into the unique and intimate worlds of everyday Australians.

Hardie Grant and SBS champion the voices of often underrepresented Australians, and support the discovery and development of emerging talent to contribute to greater diversity in Australian storytelling.

Themes: Australian Non-Fiction, short stories, multiculturalism, memoir

[Want to read](#)



Abomination - Ashley Goldberg

Fiction

(228 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



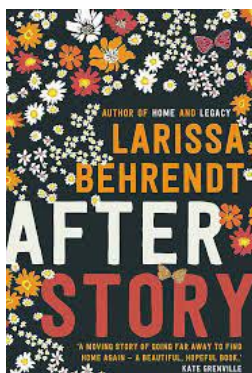
'He who turns his ear away from hearing the Torah - even his prayer is an abomination.' Proverbs 28-9

Melbourne 1999- Ezra and Yonatan are best friends whose lives are forever changed when their school, the ultra-Orthodox Jewish Yahel Academy, is rocked by a scandal and they are thrown onto divergent paths. Twenty years later, the lives of the two men are very different- Ezra identifies as secular and atheist, while Yonatan has been ordained as a rabbi and teaches at the academy. By chance they are reunited, and the events of their past and present collide with devastating consequences.

Abomination lays bare the clash between religious and secular worlds in contemporary Australia and provides a revealing glimpse into a closed community. With great tenderness and insight debut author Ashley Goldberg tells the story of an enduring and evolving friendship as Yonatan and Ezra struggle to come to terms with the choices they have made, search for meaning, and forge their own identities.

Themes: Jewish, contemporary, Australian

Want to read



After Story - Larissa Behrendt

Contemporary Fiction

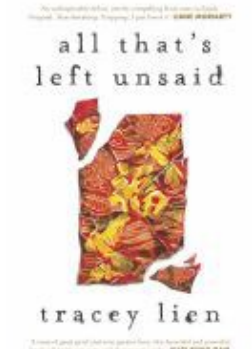
(360 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



When Indigenous lawyer Jasmine decides to take her mother Della on a tour of England's most revered literary sites, Jasmine hopes it will bring them closer together and help them reconcile the past. Twenty-five years earlier the disappearance of Jasmine's older sister devastated their tight-knit community. This tragedy returns to haunt Jasmine and Della when another child mysteriously goes missing on Hampstead Heath. As Jasmine immerses herself in the world of her literary idols – including Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters and Virginia Woolf – Della is inspired to rediscover the wisdom of her own culture and storytelling. But sometimes the stories that are not told can become too great to bear. Ambitious and engrossing, After Story celebrates the extraordinary power of words and the quiet spaces between. We can be ready to listen, but are we ready to hear?

Themes: Indigenous Australians, contemporary, personal development

Want to read



All That's Left Unsaid - Tracey Lien

Contemporary Fiction

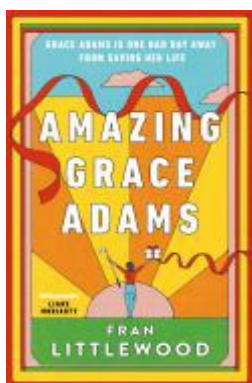
(340 pages) (e-Audiobook available)



There were a dozen witnesses to Denny Tran's brutal murder in a busy Sydney restaurant. So how come no one saw anything? 'Just let him go.' Those are words Ky Tran will forever regret. The words she spoke when her parents called to ask if they should let her younger brother Denny out to celebrate his high school graduation. That night in 1996, Denny – optimistic, guileless, brilliant Denny – is brutally murdered inside a busy restaurant in Cabramatta, a Sydney suburb facing violent crime, an indifferent police force, and the worst heroin epidemic in Australian history. Returning home for the funeral, Ky learns that the police are stumped by her brother's case: several people were at Lucky 8 restaurant when Denny died, but each of the bystanders claim to have seen nothing. As an antidote to grief and guilt, Ky is determined to track down the witnesses herself. With each encounter, she peels away another layer of the place that shaped her and Denny, exposing the trauma and seeds of violence that were planted well before that fateful celebration dinner: by colonialism, by the war in Vietnam, and by the choices they've all made to survive.

Themes: Dysfunctional families, contemporary, mystery, crime

Want to read



Amazing Grace Adams - Fran Littlewood

Contemporary Fiction

(351 pages) (e-Book available)

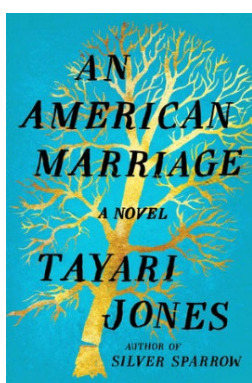


Grace Adams is one bad day away from saving her life. One hot summer day, stuck in traffic on her way to pick up the cake for her daughter's sixteenth birthday party, Grace Adams snaps. She doesn't scream or break something or cry or curl into a ball. She simply abandons her car in traffic and walks away. But not from her life - towards it. Towards the daughter who has banned her from the party. Towards the husband divorcing her. Towards the terrible thing that has blown their family apart...

She'll show her daughter that no matter how far we fall, we can always get back up. Because Grace Adams was amazing. The world and her family might have forgotten. But Grace is about to remind them.

Themes: Dysfunctional families, mothers and daughters, London

Want to read



An American Marriage - Tayari Jones

Fiction

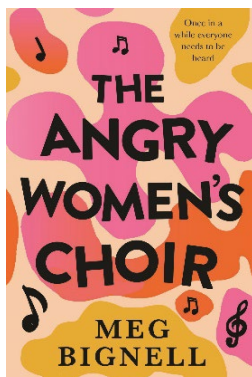
(351 pages)

Newlyweds Celestial and Roy are the embodiment of both the American Dream and the New South. He is a young executive, and she is an artist on the brink of an exciting career. But as they settle into the routine of their life together, they are ripped apart by circumstances neither could have imagined. Roy is arrested and sentenced to twelve years for a crime Celestial knows he didn't commit. Though fiercely independent, Celestial finds herself bereft and unmoored, taking comfort in Andre, her childhood friend, and best man at their wedding. As Roy's time in prison passes, she is unable to hold on to the love that has been her centre. After five years, Roy's conviction is suddenly overturned, and he returns to Atlanta ready to resume their life together.

This stirring love story is a profoundly insightful look into the hearts and minds of three people who are at once bound and separated by forces beyond their control. An American Marriage is a masterpiece of storytelling, an intimate look deep into the souls of people who must reckon with the past while moving forward—with hope and pain—into the future.

Themes: Marriage and relationship, gender roles, incarceration

Want to read



Angry Women's Choir - Meg Bignell

Contemporary Fiction

(403 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

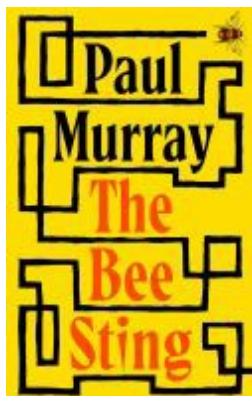
Freycinet Barnes has built herself the perfect existence. With beautiful children, a successful husband and a well-ordered schedule, it's a life so full she simply doesn't fit.

When she steps outside her calendar and is accidentally thrown into the generous bosom of the West Moonah Women's Choir, she finds music, laughter, friendship and a humming wellspring of rage. With the ready acceptance of the colourful choristers, Frey learns that voices can move mountains, fury can be kind and life can do with a bit of ruining.

Together, Frey and the choir sing their anger, they breathe it in and stitch it up, belt it out and spin it into a fierce, driving beat that will kick the system square in the balls, and possibly demolish them all.

Themes: Witty, feminism, uplifting, friendship

Want to read ☐



The Bee Sting - Paul Murray

Contemporary Fiction

(645 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

The Barnes family is in trouble. Dickie's once-lucrative car business is going under - but rather than face the music, he's spending his days in the woods, building an apocalypse-proof bunker with a renegade handyman. His exasperated wife Imelda is selling off her jewellery on eBay and half-heartedly dodging the attentions of fast-talking cattle farmer Big Mike, while their teenage daughter Cass, formerly top of her class, seems determined to binge-drink her way to her final exams. And twelve-year-old PJ, in debt to local sociopath 'Ears' Moran, is putting the final touches to his grand plan to run away from home.

Where did it all go wrong? A patch of ice on the road, a casual favour to a charming stranger, a bee caught beneath a bridal veil - can a single moment of bad luck change the direction of a life? And if the story has already been written - is there still time to find a happy ending?

Themes: Family saga, Irish, literary

Want to read ☐



Before the Coffee Gets Cold - Toshikazu Kawaguchi

Contemporary Fiction

(208 pages) (e-Book available)

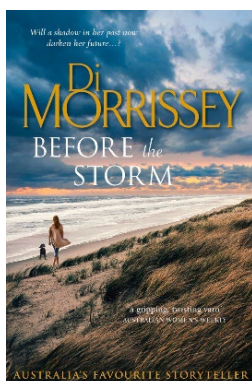
In a small back alley in Tokyo, there is a café which has been serving carefully brewed coffee for more than one hundred years. But this coffee shop offers its customers a unique experience: the chance to travel back in time.

In *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*, we meet four visitors, each of whom is hoping to make use of the café's time-travelling offer, in order to: confront the man who left them, receive a letter from their husband whose memory has been taken by early onset Alzheimer's, to see their sister one last time, and to meet the daughter they never got the chance to know.

But the journey into the past does not come without risks: customers must sit in a particular seat, they cannot leave the café, and finally, they must return to the present before the coffee gets cold ...

Themes: Magic realism, time travel, relationships, death, interconnected stories, Japan

Want to read ☐



Before the Storm - Di Morrissey

Fiction

(432 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

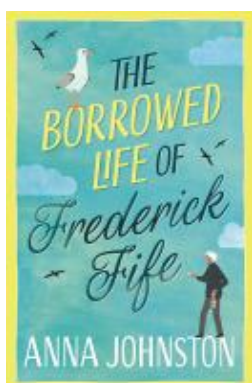
Face her demons? Or run? After being double-crossed by a devious colleague, career woman Ellie Conlan quits her job on principle. With no idea what to do next, she retreats to Storm Harbour, an idyllic Victorian beach town.

Ellie's grandfather runs *The Storm Harbour Chronicle*, the trusted local newspaper. As Ellie is drawn into a story about a development which could split the coastal community - and involves her with the influential O'Neill family - an event she has long suppressed threatens to overwhelm her.

Dark clouds gather as rumours fly and tensions mount. And when a violent storm breaks and rages, Ellie will finally have to confront her past.

Themes: Family, entitlement and greed, truth and secrets

Want to read ☐



The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife - Anna Johnston

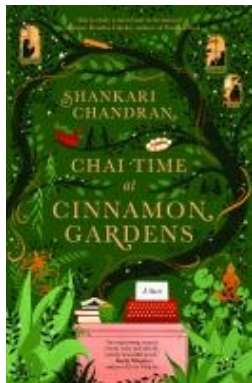
Fiction

(360 pages)

Frederick Fife was born with an extra helping of kindness in his heart. If he borrowed your car he'd return it washed and polished, with a full tank of petrol. The problem is, he has no one left to borrow from. At 82 he's desperately lonely, broke and on the brink of homelessness. But Fred's luck changes when, in a bizarre case of mistaken identity, he takes the place of cranky Bernard Greer at Wattle River Nursing Home. Suddenly he has a roof over his head, warm meals in his belly and, most importantly, the chance to be part of a family again. Fingers crossed his poker face is in better nick than his prostate, or the jig is up. As Fred walks in Bernard's shoes (and underpants), he discovers more about the man's past - and what it would take to return a broken life to mint condition.

Themes: Mistaken identity, loneliness, nursing homes, redemption

Want to read ☐



Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens - Shankari Chandran

Contemporary fiction

(384 pages) (e-Book available)



Welcome to Cinnamon Gardens, a home for those who are lost and the stories they treasure. Cinnamon Gardens Nursing Home is nestled in the quiet suburb of Westgrove, Sydney – populated with residents with colourful histories, each with their own secrets, triumphs and failings. This is their safe place, an oasis of familiar delights – a beautiful garden, a busy kitchen and a bountiful recreation schedule.

But this ordinary neighbourhood is not without its prejudices. The serenity of Cinnamon Gardens is threatened by malignant forces more interested in what makes this refuge different rather than embracing the calm companionship that makes this place home to so many. As those who challenge the residents' existence make their stand against the nursing home with devastating consequences, our characters are forced to reckon with a country divided.

Themes: Friendship, community, racism

Want to read



The Collected Regrets of Clover - Mikki Brammer

Contemporary Fiction

(314 pages) (e-Book available)



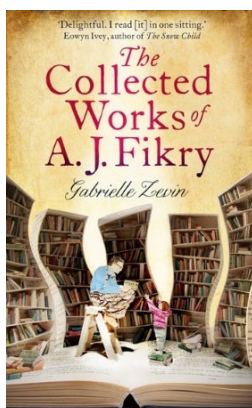
In her work as a 'death doula', Clover Brooks ushers people peacefully through their last days, collecting their final words into three notebooks: ADVICE, CONFESSIONS and REGRETS.

But Clover spends so much time with the dying that she's forgotten how to live . . .

Can her clients' hard-won wisdom – and the inspiring love story of a spirited old woman named Claudia – show Clover the way to a happy ending? After all, what's the point of giving someone a beautiful death if you can't give yourself a beautiful life?

Themes: New York, regrets, relationships, death and dying

Want to read



The Collected Works of AJ Fikry - Gabrielle Zevin

Contemporary fiction

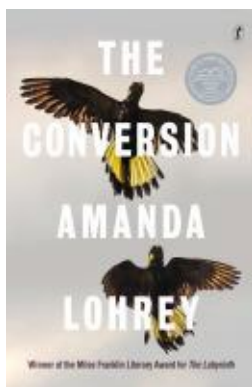
(320 pages)

A.J. Fikry owns a failing bookshop. His wife has just died, in tragic circumstances. His rare and valuable first edition has been stolen. His life is a wreck. Amelia is a book rep, with a big heart, and a lonely life. Maya is the baby who ends up on AJ's bookshop floor with a note. What happens in the bookshop that changes the lives of these seemingly normal but extraordinary characters?

This is the story of how unexpected love can rescue you and bring you back to real life, in a world that you won't want to leave, with characters that you will come to love.

Themes: Bereavement, booksellers, love, adoption

Want to read



The Conversion - Amanda Lohrey

Literary Fiction

(240 pages) (eBook available)

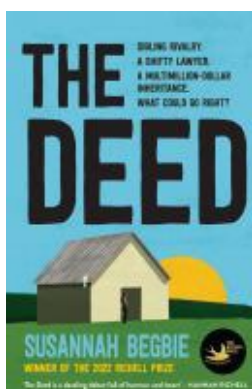


The conversion was Nick's idea. Nick- so persuasive, ever the optimist, still boyishly handsome. Always on a quest to design the perfect environment, convinced it could heal a wounded soul. The conversion was Nick's idea, but it's Zoe who's here now, in a valley of old coalmines and new vineyards, working out how to live in a deconsecrated church. What to do with all that vertical space, those oppressive stained-glass windows? Can a church become a home or, even with all its vestiges removed, will it remain forever what it was intended to be?

For Zoe, alone and troubled by a ghost from the recent past, the little church seems empty of the possibilities Nick enthused about. She is stuck in purgatory-until a determined young teacher pushes her way into Zoe's life, convinced of her own peculiar mission for the building. Melanie has something of Nick's unquenchable zeal about her. And it's clear to Zoe that she won't take no for an answer.

Themes: Australian, contemporary, religion

Want to read



The Deed - Susannah Begbie

Contemporary fiction

(374 pages)

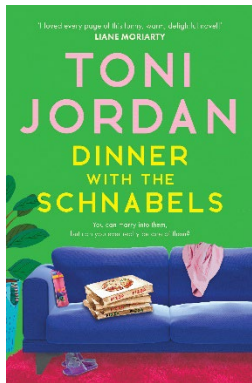
Tom Edwards is dying, and cranky. He's made his peace with the dying part. But he'd bet his property - the whole ten thousand acres of it - that there'd be no wailing at his funeral. His kids wouldn't be able to chop down a tree, let alone build a coffin to bury him in. Then Tom has an idea ...

Christine is furious, David ashen-faced, and Sophie distracted. Only Jenny listens carefully as Vince Barton, of Barton & Sons, reads their father's will. Either they build his coffin - in four days - or they lose their inheritance. All of it.

A perceptive and unforgettable debut novel, The Deed explores the messy, sometimes volatile, complications that only the best and worst of family can bring. Sometimes greed can be good.

Themes: Death, inheritance, local setting

Want to read



Dinner with the Schnabels - Toni Jordan

Contemporary fiction

(400 pages)

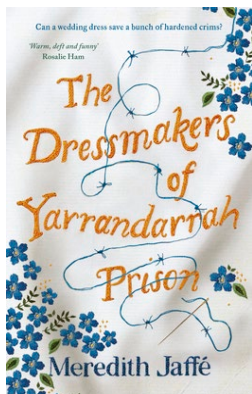
You can marry into them, but can you ever really be one of them? A novel about marriage, love and family.

Things haven't gone well for Simon Larsen lately. He adores his wife, Tansy, and his children, but since his business failed and he lost the family home, he can't seem to get off the couch. His larger-than-life in-laws, the Schnabels - Tansy's mother, sister and brother - won't get off his case.

To keep everyone happy, Simon needs to do one little job: he has a week to landscape a friend's backyard for an important Schnabel family event. But as the week progresses, Simon is derailed by the arrival of an unexpected house guest. Then he discovers Tansy is harbouring a secret. As his world spins out of control, who can Simon really count on when the chips are down?

Themes: Family, relationships, humour

Want to read



The Dressmakers of Yarrandarrah Prison - Meredith Jaffe

Contemporary Fiction

(368 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Derek's daughter, Debbie, is getting married. He's desperate to be there, but he's banged up in Yarrandarrah Correctional Centre for embezzling funds from the golf club, and, thanks to his ex-wife, Lorraine, he hasn't spoken to Debbie in years. He wants to make a grand gesture - to show her how much he loves her. But what?

Inspiration strikes while he's embroidering a cushion at his weekly prison sewing circle - he'll make her a wedding dress. His fellow stitchers rally around and soon this motley gang of crims is immersed in a joyous whirl of silks, satins and covered buttons.

But as time runs out and tensions rise both inside and outside the prison, the wedding dress project takes on greater significance. With lives at stake, Derek feels his chance to reconcile with Debbie is slipping through his fingers...

Themes: Dressmaking, Australian, parent and child relationships, prisoners

Want to read



Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine - Gail Honeyman

Psychological fiction

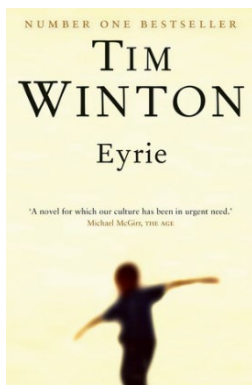
(400 pages) (e-Book available)

The story centres on Eleanor Oliphant, a social misfit with a traumatic past who becomes enamoured with a singer, whom she believes she is destined to be with. The novel deals with themes of isolation and loneliness, and depicts Eleanor's transformational journey towards a fuller understanding of self and life. Eleanor Oliphant leads a simple life. She wears the same clothes to work every day, eats the same meal deal for lunch every day and buys the same two bottles of vodka to drink every weekend. Eleanor Oliphant is happy. Nothing is missing from her carefully timetabled life. Except, sometimes, everything.

One simple act of kindness is about to shatter the walls Eleanor has built around herself. Now she must learn how to navigate the world that everyone else seems to take for granted - while searching for the courage to face the dark corners she's avoided all her life. Change can be good. Change can be bad. But surely any change is better than... fine?

Themes: Isolation, prejudice, trauma recovery, friendship

Want to read



Eyrie - Tim Winton

Contemporary Fiction

(424 pages) (MP3 and e-Audiobook available)

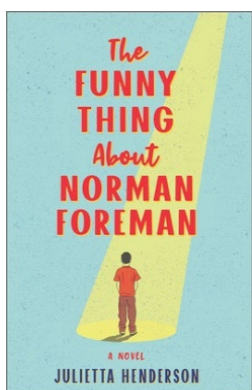
Eyrie tells the story of Tom Keely, a man who's lost his bearings in middle age and is now holed up in a flat at the top of a grim highrise, looking down on the world he's fallen out of love with.

He's cut himself off, until one day he runs into some neighbours: a woman he used to know when they were kids, and her introverted young boy. The encounter shakes him up in a way he doesn't understand. Despite himself, Keely lets them in.

What follows is a heart-stopping, groundbreaking novel for our times - funny, confronting, exhilarating and haunting - populated by unforgettable characters. It asks how, in an impossibly compromised world, we can ever hope to do the right thing...

Themes: Relationships, Western Australia, belonging

Want to read



The Funny Thing About Norman Foreman - Julietta Henderson

Contemporary Fiction

(400 pages)

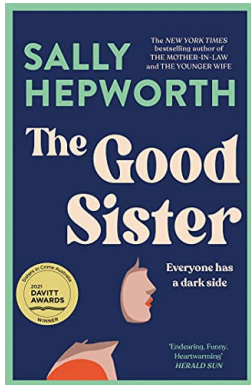
Twelve-year-old Norman Foreman and his best friend, Jax, are a legendary comedic duo in waiting, with a plan to take their act all the way to the Edinburgh Fringe. But when Jax dies, Norman decides the only fitting tribute is to perform at the festival himself. The problem is, Norman's not the funny one. Jax was.

There's also another, far more colossal objective on Norman's new plan that his single mom, Sadie, wasn't ready for: he wants to find the father he's never known. Determined to put a smile back on her boy's face, Sadie resolves to face up to her own messy past, get Norman to the Fringe and help track down a man whose identity is a mystery, even to her.

Julietta Henderson's delightfully charming, tender and uplifting debut takes us on a road trip with a mother and son who will live in the reader's heart for a long time to come, and teaches us that—no matter the odds—we must always reach for the stars.

Themes: Families, friendship, mothers and sons

Want to read



The Good Sister - Sally Hepworth

Contemporary Fiction

(309 pages) (MP3 and e-Book available)

There's only been one time that Rose couldn't stop me from doing the wrong thing and that was a mistake that will haunt me for the rest of my life. Fern Castle works in her local library. She has dinner with her twin sister Rose three nights a week. And she avoids crowds, bright lights and loud noises as much as possible. Fern has a carefully structured life and disrupting her routine can be...dangerous.

When Rose discovers that she cannot get pregnant, Fern sees her chance to pay her sister back for everything Rose has done for her. Fern can have a baby for Rose. She just needs to find a father. Simple.

Fern's mission will shake the foundations of the life she has carefully built for herself and stir up dark secrets from the past, in this quirky, rich and shocking story of what families keep hidden.

Themes: Mystery, thriller, families, mothers and sons

Want to read ☐



The Hummingbird Effect - Kate Mildenhall - OBOW (2024)

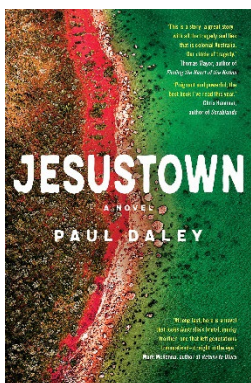
Fiction

(320 pages) (Large Print, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

One of the lucky few with a job during the Depression, Peggy's just starting out in life. She's a bagging girl at the Angliss meatworks in Footscray, a place buzzing with life as well as death, where the gun slaughterman Jack has caught her eye – and she his. How is her life connected to Hilda's, almost a hundred years later, locked inside during a plague, or La's, further on again, a singer working shifts in a warehouse as her eggs are frozen and her voice is used by AI bots? Let alone Maz, far removed in time, diving for remnants of a past that must be destroyed? Is it by the river that runs through their stories, eternal yet constantly changing – or by the mysterious Hummingbird Project, and the great question of whether the march of progress can ever be reversed?

Themes: Speculative Fiction, feminism, dystopia, workers rights

Want to read ☐



Jesustown - Paul Daley

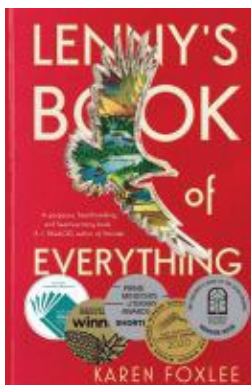
Fiction

(376 pages)

Morally bereft popular historian Patrick Renmark flees London in disgrace after the accidental death of his infant son. With one card left to play, he reluctantly takes a commission to write the biography of his legendary pioneering adventurer-anthropologist grandfather. With no enthusiasm and even less integrity, Patrick travels to Jesustown, the former mission town in remote Australia where his grandfather infamously brokered 'peace' between the Indigenous custodians of the area and the white constabulary. He hasn't been back there since he was a teenager when a terrible confrontation with his grandfather made him vow never to return. Of course nothing is as it seems or as Patrick wants it to be. Unable to lay his own son to rest, Patrick must re-examine the legacy of his renowned grandfather and face the repercussions of his actions on subsequent generations. Will what he finds bring him redemption or add to the vault of family secrets and terrible guilt he keeps uncovering?

Themes: Indigenous history, frontier violence, redemption, anthropology

Want to read ☐



Lenny's Book of Everything - Karen Foxlee

Literary Fiction

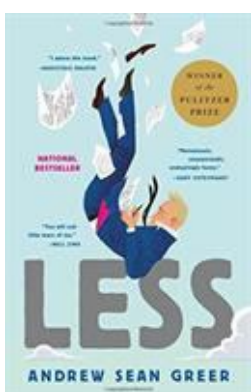
(352 pages) (MP3 and e-Audiobook available)

Lenny, small and sharp, has a younger brother Davey who won't stop growing - and at seven is as tall as a man. Raised by their single mother, who works two jobs and is made almost entirely out of worries, they have food and a roof over their heads, but not much else.

The bright spot every week is the arrival of the latest issue of Burrell's Build-It-at-Home Encyclopedia. Through the encyclopedia, Lenny and Davey experience the wonders of the world - beetles, birds, quasars, quartz - and dream about a life of freedom and adventure, visiting places like Saskatchewan and Yellowknife, and the gleaming lakes of the Northwest Territories. But as her brother's health deteriorates, Lenny comes to accept the inevitable truth; Davey will never make it to Great Bear Lake.

Themes: Coming of age, young adult fiction, sickness and grief

Want to read ☐



Less - Andrew Sean Greer

Contemporary Fiction

(263 pages)

You are a failed novelist about to turn fifty. A wedding invitation arrives in the mail: your boyfriend of the past nine years now engaged to someone else. You can't say yes—it would all be too awkward—and you can't say no—it would look like defeat. On your desk are a series of half-baked literary invitations you've received from around the world.

QUESTION: How do you arrange to skip town?
ANSWER: You accept them all.
If you are Arthur Less.

Thus begins an around-the-world-in-eighty-days fantasia that will take Arthur Less to Mexico, Italy, Germany, Morocco, India and Japan and put thousands of miles between him and the problems he refuses to face. What could possibly go wrong?

Themes: LGBTQIA, relationships, travel, humour

Want to read ☐



The Lessons - John Purcell

Literary Fiction

(384 pages)

1961

When teens Daisy and Harry meet, it feels so right they promise to love each other forever, but everything is stacked against them: class, education, expectations. After Daisy is sent by her parents to live with her glamorous, bohemian Aunt Jane, a novelist working on her second book, she is confronted by adult truths and suffers a loss of innocence that flings her far from the one good thing in her life, Harry.

1983

Jane Curtis, now a famous novelist, is at a prestigious book event in New York, being interviewed about the overlap between her life and her work, including one of her novels about the traumatic coming of age of a young woman. But she evades the interviewer's probing questions. What is she trying to hide?

Themes: Coming of age, psychic trauma, authors, first love

Want to read



The Librarianist - Patrick deWitt

Contemporary Fiction

(352 pages)

Bob Comet is a retired librarian passing his solitary days surrounded by books and small comforts in a mint-coloured house in Portland, Oregon. One morning on his daily walk he encounters a confused elderly woman lost in a market and returns her to the senior centre that is her home. Hoping to fill the void he's known since retiring, he begins volunteering at the centre. Here, as a community of strange peers gathers around Bob, and following a happenstance brush with a painful complication from his past, the events of his life and the details of his character are revealed. Behind Bob Comet's straight-man façade is the story of an unhappy child's runaway adventure during the last days of the Second World War, of true love won and stolen away, of the purpose and pride found in the librarian's vocation, and of the pleasures of a life lived to the side of the masses. Bob's experiences are imbued with melancholy but also a bright, sustained comedy; he has a talent for locating bizarre and outsize players to welcome onto the stage of his life.

Themes: Books about books, loneliness, self-acceptance

Want to read



The Lonely Hearts Book Club - Lucy Gilmore

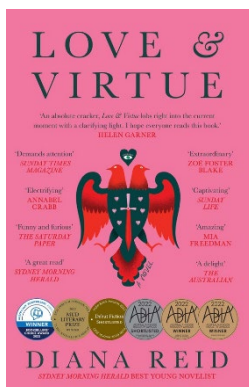
Contemporary Fiction

(368 pages) (e-Book available)

A young librarian and an old curmudgeon forge the unlikely of friendships in this charming, feel-good novel about one misfit book club and the lives (and loves) it changed along the way. Sloane Parker lives a small, contained life as a librarian in her small, contained town. She never thinks of herself as lonely...but still she looks forward to that time every day when old curmudgeon Arthur McLachlan comes to browse the shelves and cheerfully insult her. Their sparring is such a highlight of Sloane's day that when Arthur doesn't show up one morning, she's instantly concerned. And then another day passes, and another. Anxious, Sloane tracks the old man down only to discover him all but bedridden...and desperately struggling to hide how happy he is to see her. Wanting to bring more cheer into Arthur's gloomy life, Sloane creates an impromptu book club. Slowly, the lonely misfits of their sleepy town begin to find each other, and in their book club, find the joy of unlikely friendship. Because as it turns out, everyone has a special book in their heart—and a reason to get lost (and eventually found) within the pages. Books have a way of bringing even the loneliest of souls together...

Themes: Contemporary fiction, humour, small town, books about books

Want to read



Love and Virtue - Diana Reid

Contemporary Fiction

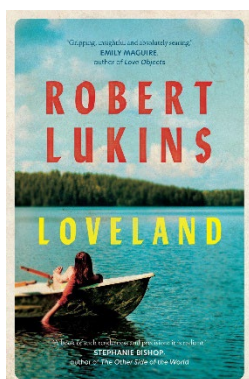
(320 pages) (e-Book available)

Whenever I say I was at university with Eve, people ask me what she was like, sceptical perhaps that she could have always been as whole and self-assured as she now appears. To which I say something like: 'People are infinitely complex.' But I say it in such a way—so pregnant with misanthropy—that it's obvious I hate her.

Michaela and Eve are two bright, bold women who befriend each other their first year at a residential college at university, where they live in adjacent rooms. They could not be more different; one assured and popular – the other uncertain and eager-to-please. But something happens one night in O-week – a drunken encounter, a foggy memory that will force them to confront the realities of consenting and wrestle with the dynamics of power. Initially bonded by their wit and sharp eye for the colleges' mix of material wealth and moral poverty, Michaela and Eve soon discover how fragile friendship is, and how capable of betrayal they both are.

Themes: Feminism, friendship, social classes

Want to read



Loveland - Robert Lukins

Contemporary fiction

(335 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Two women stand in the shallows, a man dead at their feet, while around them buildings burn. Amid the ruins of a fire-ravaged amusement park and destroyed waterfront dwellings, one boarded-up building still stands.

May has come from Australia to Loveland, Nebraska, to claim the house on the poisoned lake as part of her grandmother's will. Escaping the control of her husband, will she find refuge or danger? As she starts repairing the old house, May is drawn to discover more about her silent, emotionally distant grandmother and unravel the secrets that Casey had moved halfway around the world to keep hidden.

How she and Casey's lives interconnect, and the price they both must pay for their courage, is gradually revealed as this novel unfolds.

Themes: Loss, family secrets, domestic abuse

Want to read



The Midnight Library - Matt Haig

Literary Fiction

(288 pages) (e-Audiobook available)

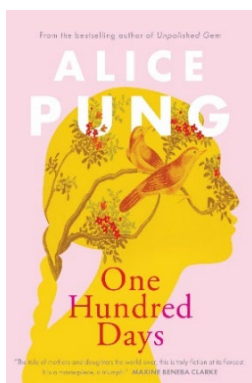


Somewhere out beyond the edge of the universe there is a library that contains an infinite number of books, each one the story of another reality. One tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the other life you could have lived if you had made a different choice at any point in your life. While we all wonder how our lives might have been, what if you had the chance to go to the library and see for yourself? Would any of these other lives truly be better?

In *The Midnight Library*, Matt Haig's enchanting new novel, Nora Seed finds herself faced with this decision. Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, following a different career, undoing old breakups, realizing her dreams of becoming a glaciologist; she must search within herself as she travels through the Midnight Library to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living in the first place.

Themes: Literary fiction, alternative timelines, lives not lived

Want to read ☐



One Hundred Days - Alice Pung - OBOW (2022)

Contemporary Fiction

(256 pages) (MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



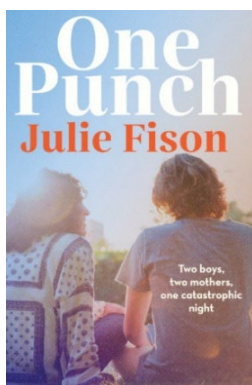
One hundred days. It's no time at all, she tells me. But she's not the one waiting.

In a heady whirlwind of independence, lust and defiance, sixteen-year-old Karuna falls pregnant. Not on purpose, but not entirely by accident, either. Incensed, Karuna's mother, already over-protective, confines her to their fourteenth-storey housing-commission flat, to keep her safe from the outside world - and make sure she can't get into any more trouble.

Stuck inside for endless hours, Karuna battles her mother and herself for a sense of power in her own life, as a new life forms and grows within her. As the due date draws ever closer, the question of who will get to raise the baby - who it will call Mum - festers between them.

Themes: Mother/daughter relationships, teen pregnancy, self-discovery

Want to read ☐



One Punch - Julie Fison

Contemporary Fiction

(311 pages) (e-Book available)



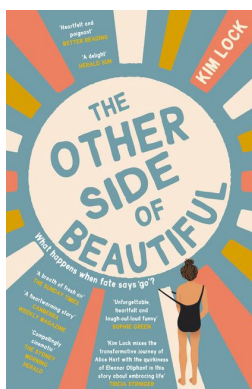
Yasmin Weston is on holiday when she learns that her son Daniel has been assaulted at home in Australia, leaving him with a debilitating brain injury. She vows to hunt down her son's attacker.

Evie MacIntyre knows the Westons from school. She's never had much time for Yasmin, and she dislikes Daniel because he bullied her son, Brody. When Evie discovers evidence that Brody was involved in the attack, she is torn but decides there is no way she will let her only son go to jail.

As two mothers wrestle with the consequences of their actions, two families suffer the shockwaves of one catastrophic night and a punch that changes everything.

Themes: Love, morality, justice

Want to read ☐



The Other Side of Beautiful - Kim Lock

Contemporary Fiction

(368 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



Meet Mercy Blain, whose house has just burnt down. Unfortunately for Mercy, this goes beyond the disaster it would be for most people: she hasn't been outside that house for two years. Flung out into the world she's been studiously ignoring, Mercy goes to the only place she can: her not-quite-ex-husband Eugene's house. But it turns out she can't stay there either.

And so begins Mercy's unwilling journey. After the chance purchase of a cult classic campervan (read tiny, old and smelly), with the company of her sausage dog, Wasabi, and a mysterious box of cremated remains, Mercy heads north from Adelaide to Darwin. On the road, through badly timed breakdowns, gregarious troupes of grey nomads, and run-ins with a rogue adversary, Mercy's carefully constructed walls start crumbling. But what was Mercy hiding from in her house? And why is Eugene desperate to have her back in the city? They say you can't run forever...

Themes: Relationships, mental health, Australian road trip

Want to read ☐



Our Missing Hearts - Celeste Ng

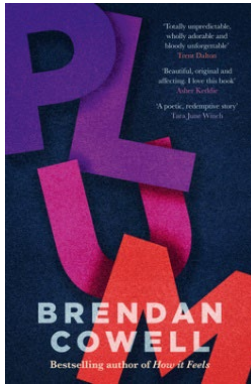
Contemporary fiction

(335 pages)

Twelve-year-old Bird Gardner lives a quiet existence with his loving but broken father, a former linguist who now shelves books in Harvard's library. He knows not to ask too many questions, stand out too much, stray too far. For a decade, their lives have been governed by laws written to preserve 'American culture' in the wake of years of economic instability and violence. To keep the peace and restore prosperity, the authorities are now allowed to relocate children of dissidents, especially those of Asian origin, and libraries have been forced to remove books seen as unpatriotic - including the work of Bird's mother, Margaret, a Chinese American poet who left the family when he was nine years old. Bird has grown up disavowing his mother and her poems; he doesn't know her work or what happened to her, and he knows he shouldn't wonder. But when he receives a mysterious letter containing only a cryptic drawing, he is drawn into a quest to find her. His journey will take him through the many folktales she poured into his head as a child, through the ranks of an underground network of librarians, into the lives of the children who have been taken, and finally to New York, where a new act of defiance may be the beginning of much-needed change.

Themes: Racism, family relations, librarians

Want to read ☐



Plum - Brandon Cowell

Contemporary Fiction

(336 pages) (MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

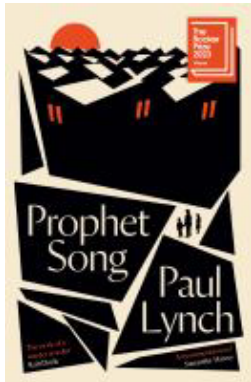


Peter 'The Plum' Lum is a 49-year-old ex-star NRL player, living with his son and girlfriend in Cronulla. He's living a pretty cruise life until one day he suffers an epileptic fit and discovers that he has a brain disorder as a result of the thousand-odd head knocks he took on the footy field in his twenty-year-career. According to his neurologist, Plum has to make some changes - right now - or it's dementia, or even death.

Reluctantly, Plum embarks on a journey of self-care and self-discovery, which is not so easy when all you've ever known is to go full tilt at everything. On top of this, he's being haunted by dead poets, and, unable to stop crying, discovers he has a special gift for the spoken word. With spectral visits from Bukowski and Plath, the friendship of local misfits, and the prospect of new love, Plum might just save his own life.

Themes: Rugby league, head injuries, masculinity, poetry, self-discovery

Want to read ☐



Prophet Song - Paul Lynch

Literary Fiction

(309 pages) (e-Book available)

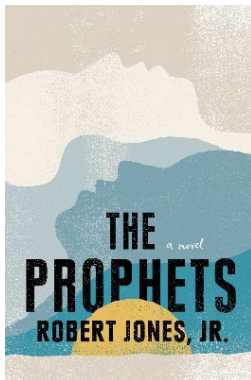


On a dark, wet evening in Dublin, scientist and mother-of-four Eilish Stack answers her front door to find two officers from Ireland's newly formed secret police on her step. They have arrived to interrogate her husband, a trade unionist. Ireland is falling apart, caught in the grip of a government turning towards tyranny. As the life she knows and the ones she loves disappear before her eyes, Eilish must contend with the dystopian logic of her new, unravelling country. How far will she go to save her family? And what—or who—is she willing to leave behind?

The winner of the Booker Prize 2023 and a critically acclaimed national bestseller, Prophet Song presents a terrifying and shocking vision of a country sliding into authoritarianism and a deeply human portrait of a mother's fight to hold her family together.

Themes: Slavery, love story, religion

Want to read ☐



The Prophets - Robert Jones Jr.

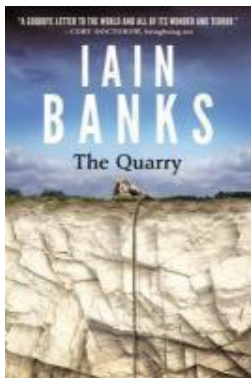
Literary Fiction

(400 pages)

Isaiah was Samuel's and Samuel was Isaiah's. That was the way it was since the beginning, and the way it was to be until the end. In the barn they tended to the animals, but also to each other, transforming the hollowed-out shed into a place of human refuge, a source of intimacy and hope in a world ruled by vicious masters. But when an older man—a fellow slave—seeks to gain favour by preaching the master's gospel on the plantation, the enslaved begin to turn on their own. Isaiah and Samuel's love, which was once so simple, is seen as sinful and a clear danger to the plantation's harmony. Robert Jones, Jr. fiercely summons the voices of slave and the enslaved alike to tell the story of these two men; from Amos the preacher to the calculating slave-master himself to the long line of women that surround them, women who have carried the soul of the plantation on their shoulders. As tensions build and the weight of centuries—of ancestors and future generations to come—culminate in a climactic reckoning, *The Prophets* masterfully reveals the pain and suffering of inheritance, but is also shot through with hope, beauty, and truth, portraying the enormous, heroic power of love.

Themes: Slavery, love story, religion

Want to read ☐



The Quarry - Iain Banks

Fiction

(336 pages)

Eighteen-year-old Kit is weird: big, strange, odd, socially disabled, on a spectrum that stretches from "highly gifted" at one end, to "nutter" at the other. At least Kit knows who his father is; he and Guy live together in a decaying country house on the unstable brink of a vast quarry. His mother's identity is another matter. Now, though, his father's dying, and old friends are gathering for one last time.

"Uncle" Paul's a media lawyer now; Rob and Ali are upwardly mobile corporate bunnies; pretty, hopeful Pris is a single mother; Haze is still living up to his drug-inspired name twenty years on; and fierce, protective Hol is a gifted if acerbic critic. As young film students they lived at Willoughtree House with Guy, and they've all come back because they want something. Kit, too, has his own ulterior motives. Before his father dies he wants to know who his mother is, and what's on the mysterious tape they're all looking for. But most of all he wants to stop time and keep his father alive.

Themes: Scotland, friendship, autism, family, death

Want to read ☐



Questions of Travel - Michelle deKretser

Fiction

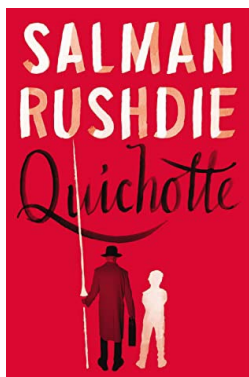
(528 pages) (MP3 and e-Book available)



Laura Fraser grows up in Sydney, Australia, motherless, with a cold, professional father and an artistic bent. Ravi Mendes is on the other side of the world—his humble father dead, his mother struggling, he determined to make it by way of the burgeoning field of computer science. When Laura inherited money from the aunt who raised her, she set off to see the world-alone," because two makes one a tourist." When Ravi's family was devastated by a politically motivated atrocity, he sought asylum in Sydney. The two meet there at a travel-guide publishing house. She is an editor who lives with an elderly Italian, and he is a website designer who wants only to make a living, see a bit of Australia, and possibly court Hana, a cosmopolitan Ethiopian woman. Where do these disparate characters truly belong? With her trademark subtlety, Michelle de Kretser shows us that, in the 21st century, they belong wherever they want to and can be—home or away. She has written a masterful novel for our time that resonates with dazzling beauty, uncanny common sense, sharp wit, and a deep knowledge of what makes us tick.

Themes: Travel, relationships, belonging

Want to read ☐



Quichotte - Salman Rushdie

Literary fiction

(393 pages)

Inspired by the Cervantes classic, Sam DuChamp, mediocre writer of spy thrillers, creates Quichotte, a courtly, added salesman obsessed with television, who falls in impossible love with a TV star. Together with his (imaginary) son Sancho, Quichotte sets off on a picaresque quest across America to prove worthy of her hand, gallantly braving the tragicomic perils of an age where "Anything-Can-Happen". Meanwhile his creator, in a midlife crisis, has equally urgent challenges of his own. Just as Cervantes wrote Don Quixote to satirise the culture of his time, Rushdie takes the reader on a wild ride through a country on the verge of moral and spiritual collapse. And with the kind of storytelling magic that is the hallmark of his work, the fully realised lives of DuChamp and Quichotte intertwine in a profoundly human quest for love and a wickedly entertaining portrait of an age in which fact is so often indiscernible from fiction.

Themes: Midlife crisis, travelling salespeople, picaresque

Want to read



A Recipe for Family - Tori Haschka

Contemporary Fiction

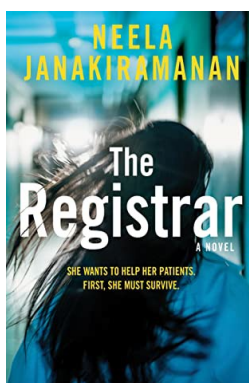
(400 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Things are getting slippery for Stella. With her husband away she's juggling a full-time job, a tricky stepdaughter and a relentless four-year-old – all while trying to find her footing in her spouse's shiny world. Joining the throng of local mothers, she reluctantly hires an au pair in the hope that it will lighten the load.

Stella's mother-in-law, Elise, thinks this is a rotten idea. An industrial chemist and staunch feminist, she finds the ethical murkiness surrounding the au pair solution difficult to swallow. But she's promised her son not to meddle, has her own career battles to slay and ghosts of her own past to contend with. For Ava, life in Sydney as an au pair could help fill the void left by the loss of her mother. With her family recipes in her hand and hope in her heart, she sets off to reinvent herself in a place far away. Three women, drawn together by impossible circumstances, will discover that the greatest comfort can often be found in the mess.

Themes: Australian fiction, families, humour, food writing

Want to read



The Registrar - Neela Janakiraman

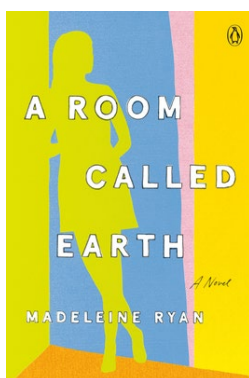
Contemporary Fiction

(368 pages)

Dedicated and ambitious, Emma Swann is about to start a gruelling year as a surgical registrar at the prestigious Mount teaching hospital. She's excited to join her adored older brother Andy in pursuing the same career as their father, an eminent surgeon who made his name at The Mount. But the pressure of living up to his distinguished reputation is nothing compared to the escalating stress Emma experiences as a registrar. It's an arduous, unrelenting slog of twenty-hour days, punishing schedules, life and death decisions - and very little assistance, instruction or support from her superiors, who waste no time pointing out just how superior they are. Amidst a background culture of humiliation and bullying, being a woman just makes things worse: misogyny is rife and Emma is subjected to other, more insidious, kinds of male attention. As Emma battles overwork, exhaustion and increasing disillusion, she has less and less ability and time to care for her patients' welfare, and that of herself and those she loves. Is it possible for her to be the doctor, wife, sister and friend she aspires to be in such a broken hospital system? Can she salvage her own life while she's trying to save others'? And how can she and her colleagues endure such impossible conditions without making fatal mistakes?

Themes: Medicine, public health, surgeons, surgical training

Want to read



A Room Called Earth - Madeleine Ryan

Fiction

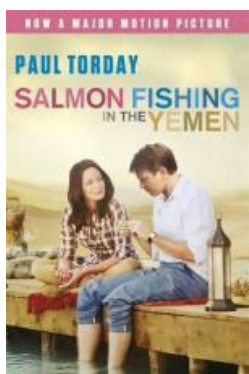
(289 pages)

As a full moon rises over Melbourne, Australia, a young woman gets ready for a party. And what appears to be an ordinary night out is—through the prism of her singular perspective—extraordinary. As the evening unfolds, each encounter she has reveals the vast discrepancies between what she is thinking and feeling, and what she is able to say. And there's so much she'd like to say. So when she meets a man and a genuine connection occurs, it's nothing short of a miracle. However, it isn't until she invites him home that we come to appreciate the humanity beneath the labels we cling to, and we can grasp the pleasure of what it means to be alive.

The debut novel from the inimitable Madeleine Ryan, A Room Called Earth is a humorous and heart-warming adventure inside the mind of a bright and dynamic woman. This hyper-saturated celebration of love and acceptance, from a neurodiverse writer, is a testament to moving through life without fear, and to opening ourselves up to a new way of relating to one another.

Themes: Autistic Spectrum Disorder, mental health, contemporary

Want to read



Salmon Fishing in Yemen - Paul Torday

Comic Fiction

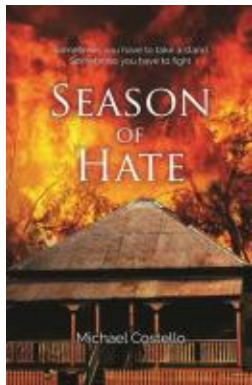
(329 pages) (DVD available)

What does it take to make us believe in the impossible?

For Dr. Alfred Jones, life is a quiet mixture of civil service at the National Centre for Fisheries Excellence and marriage to Mary—an ambitious, no-nonsense financier. But a strange turn of fate from an unexpected direction forces Jones to upend his existence and spend all of his time in pursuit of another man's ludicrous dream. Can there be salmon in the Yemen? Science says no. But if resources are limitless and the visionary is inspired, maybe salmon fishing in the Yemen isn't impossible. Then again, maybe nothing is.

Themes: Humour, romance, politics

Want to read



Season of Hate - Michael Costello

Humour

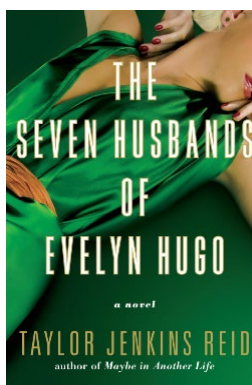
(304 pages)

Discrimination towards others is sometimes based on as little as difference of appearance or culture and fuelled by intolerance. When confronted by it, do we turn our backs and walk away, or take a stand beside the oppressed? 1985 and Pat the narrator returns to his small wheat town to settle his father's estate. He recalls the events when he first moved there from Sydney as an eight year old in 1955 with twin brother Doug and his GP father.

Season of Hate is the moving story of the friendship between the boys and Johnny, the mute Aboriginal teenager. In those first two years in their seemingly ideal world, the boys are exposed to the best and worst of human nature as they become aware of the undercurrents of discrimination and racial bigotry that erupt into violence. In particular, that one night where Pat's own life is challenged. The night where one wanton act places the town's very livelihood in jeopardy.

Themes: Australian, friendship, racism and discrimination

Want to read



Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo - Taylor Jenkins Reid

Psychological fiction

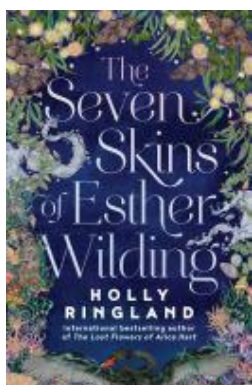
(389 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



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.

Themes: Women, human rights workers, Hollywood, biographers, LGBTQIA

Want to read



The Seven Skins of Esther Wilding - Holly Ringland

Psychological Fiction

(549 pages) (Large Print, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

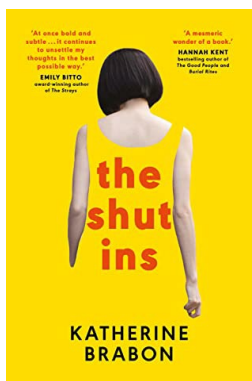


From international bestselling author of The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart, Holly Ringland, comes a haunting and magical novel about joy, grief, courage, and transformation. 'On the afternoon that Esther Wilding drove homeward along the coast, a year after her sister had walked into the sea and disappeared, the light was painfully golden.'

The last time Esther Wilding's beloved older sister Aura was seen, she was walking along the shore towards the sea. In the wake of Aura's disappearance, Esther's family struggles to live with their loss. To seek the truth about her sister's death, Esther reluctantly travels from Lutruwita, Tasmania to Copenhagen, and then to the Faroe Islands, following the trail of the stories Aura left behind: seven fairy tales about selkies, swans and women, alongside cryptic verses Aura wrote and had secretly tattooed on her body.

Themes: Sisters, family, Australian, retelling, grief and forgiveness

Want to read



The Shut Ins - Katherine Brabon

Literary Fiction

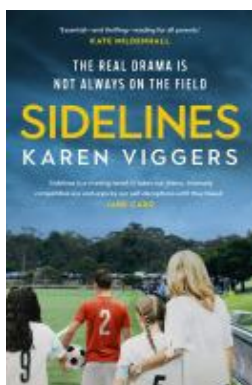
(252 pages)

Mai and Hikaru went to school together in the city of Nagoya, until Hikaru disappeared when they were eighteen. It is not until ten years later, when Mai runs into Hikaru's mother, Hiromi Sato, that she learns Hikaru has become a *hikikomori*, a recluse unable to leave his bedroom for years. In secret, Hiromi Sato hires Mai as a 'rental sister', to write letters to Hikaru and encourage him to leave his room.

Mai has recently married J, a devoted salaryman with conservative ideas about the kind of wife Mai will be. The renewed contact with her old school friend Hikaru stirs Mai's feelings of invisibility within her marriage. She is frustrated with her life and knows she will never fulfill J's obsession with the perfect wife and mother. What else is there for Mai to do but to disappear herself?

Themes: Australian fiction, Japanese culture, loneliness

Want to read



Sidelines - Karen Viggers

Contemporary Fiction

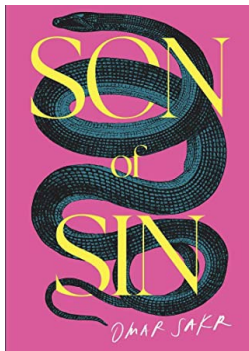
(343 pages) (e-Book available)



When a violent brawl erupts at a suburban junior soccer game, some onlookers are shocked. But others saw it coming. Rivalry, parental pressure, coaching bias, inequity, and many other factors have played a part in turning Saturday mornings into a pressure cooker. Thirteen-year-old Audrey is a talented young football player. But does she want to play for Australia or does she just want to please her father, Ben, whose own thwarted sporting career looms large in his ambitions for his daughter? Audrey's mother, Jonica, doesn't know whether to be more concerned about her anxious daughter, her overbearing husband, or the only other girl on the team, Katerina, who is causing trouble on and off the field. And Katerina's mother, Carmen, is so busy looking for opportunities to give Katerina more game time that she fails to notice what is really capturing her daughter's attention. When Griffin, a naturally gifted player with spectacular skills, arrives, the tension within the team reaches boiling point. But who is going to crack first - the parents or the players?

Themes: Australian fiction, dysfunctional families, soccer, peer pressure

Want to read



Son of Sin - Omar Sakr

Literary Fiction

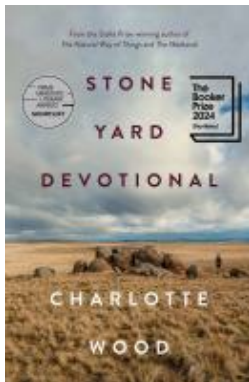
(276 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

An estranged father. An abused and abusive mother. An army of relatives. A tapestry of violence, woven across generations and geographies, from Turkey to Lebanon to Western Sydney. This is the legacy left to Jamal Smith, a young queer Muslim trying to escape a past in which memory and rumour trace ugly shapes in the dark. When every thread in life constricts instead of connects, how do you find a way to breathe? Torn between faith and fear, gossip and gospel, family and friendship, Jamal must find and test the limits of love.

In this extraordinary work, Omar Sakr deftly weaves a multifaceted tale brimming with angels and djinn, racist kangaroos and adoring bats, examining with a poet's eye the destructive impetus of repressed desire and the complexities that make us human.

Themes: Dysfunctional families, LGBTQIA literature, Arab-Australian culture

Want to read ☐



Stone Yard Devotional – Charlotte Wood

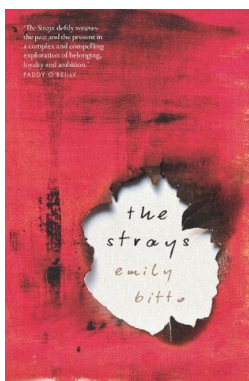
Literary Fiction

(295 pages) (e-Book available)

The winner of the Booker Prize 2024. A woman abandons her city life and marriage to return to the place of her childhood, holing up in a small religious community hidden away on the stark plains of the Monaro. She does not believe in God, doesn't know what prayer is, and finds herself living this strange, reclusive life almost by accident. As she gradually adjusts to the rhythms of monastic life, she finds herself turning again and again to thoughts of her mother, whose early death she can't forget. Disquiet interrupts this secluded life with three visitations. First comes a terrible mouse plague, each day signalling a new battle against the rising infestation. Second is the return of the skeletal remains of a sister who left the community decades before to minister to deprived women in Thailand - then disappeared, presumed murdered. Finally, a troubling visitor to the monastery pulls the narrator further back into her past. With each of these disturbing arrivals, the woman faces some deep questions. Can a person be truly good? What is forgiveness? Is loss of hope a moral failure? And can the business of grief ever really be finished? A meditative and deeply moving novel from one of Australia's most acclaimed and best loved writers.

Themes: Grief and forgiveness, relationships, religion

Want to read ☐



The Strays - Emily Bitto

Literary Fiction

(307 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

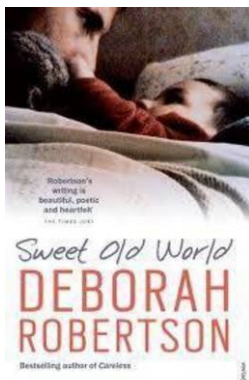
Families, art, isolation, class, childhood, friendship, and the power of the past.

On her first day at a new school, Lily meets Eva, one of the daughters of the infamous avant-garde painter Evan Trentham. He and his wife are attempting to escape the stifling conservatism of 1930s Australia by inviting other like-minded artists to live and work with them at their family home. As Lily's friendship with Eva grows, she becomes infatuated with this makeshift family and longs to truly be a part of it.

Looking back on those years later in life, Lily realises that this utopian circle involved the same themes as Evan Trentham's art: Faustian bargains and terrible recompense; spectacular fortunes and falls from grace. Yet it was not Evan, nor the other artists he gathered around him, but his own daughters, who paid the debt that was owing.

Themes: Australian fiction, art, class, female friendships, 1930s Australia

Want to read ☐



Sweet Old World - Deborah Robertson

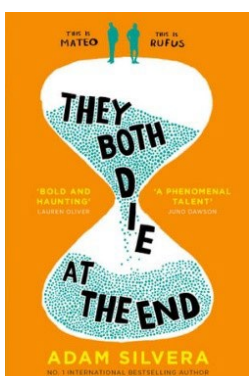
Contemporary Fiction

(291 pages)

David Quinn's dream of family has for years eluded him. Surely what he wants is simple? It's only what other men have, but there's no woman in his life, and now that he's living on a remote island in the Atlantic, do his hopes still stand a chance? It's summer on the Irish island of Inishmore, and the tourists are arriving. They're coming for the wild beauty and the five thousand years of history, the Celtic legends and the burial sites of saints. They're coming for the drink and the sex and the craic. Seventeen-year-old Esther Bradley has come from Fremantle, on the west coast of Australia. On harsh Inishmore, where people have always struggled to survive, she is battling the landscape of her own mind. David Quinn is reluctant to catch Esther when she tumbles dangerously into his life, but happiness is about to burst upon him, and every simple thing he's wanted will soon be close enough to touch. But is anything ever really simple any more? Set among the ancient stories of the haunting Aran Islands, reaching to London in the 1980s and contemporary Australia, this is an unforgettable love story about life's wounds to the spirit and flesh, and the hope we all have for healing, for one more lucky roll of the dice.

Themes: Contemporary, love stories, acceptance

Want to read ☐



They Both Die at the End - Adam Silvera

Dystopian Fiction

(373 pages) (e-Audiobook available)

On September 5th, a little after midnight, Death-Cast calls Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio to give them some bad news: they're going to die today.

Mateo and Rufus are total strangers, but, for different reasons, they're both looking to make a new friend on their End Day. The good news: there's an app for that. It's called the Last Friend, and through it, Rufus and Mateo are about to meet up for one last great adventure - to live a lifetime in a single day.

Themes: Death, LGBTQIA, romance, friendships, Young Adult

Want to read ☐



The Things We Do to Our Friends - Heather Darwent

Contemporary Fiction

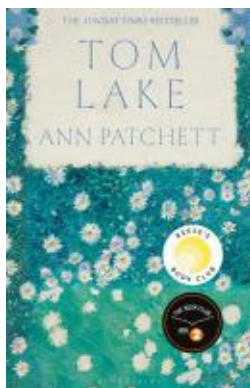
(375 pages) (eBook available)



She's an outsider desperate to belong, but the cost of entry might be her darkest secret in this intoxicating debut of literary suspense following a clique of dangerously ambitious students at the University of Edinburgh. Edinburgh, Scotland: a moody city of labyrinthine alleyways, oppressive fog, and buried history; the ultimate destination for someone with something to hide. Perfect for Clare, then, who arrives utterly alone and yearning to reinvent herself. And what better place to conceal the dark secrets in her past than at the university in the heart of the fabled, cobblestoned Old Town? When Clare meets Tabitha, a charismatic, beautiful, and intimidatingly rich girl from her art history class, she knows she's destined to be friends with her and her exclusive circle: raffish Samuel; shrewd Ava; and pragmatic Imogen. Clare is immediately drawn into their libertine world of sophisticated dinner parties and summers in France. The new life she always envisioned for herself has seemingly begun. And then Tabitha reveals a little project she's been working on, one that she needs Clare's help with. Even though it goes against everything Clare has tried to repent for. Even though their intimacy begins to darken into codependence. But as Clare starts to realize just what her friends are capable of, it's already too late...

Themes: Friendship, belonging, college students, relationships, suspense

Want to read ☐



Tom Lake - Ann Patchett

Literary Fiction

(309 pages) (eBook available)

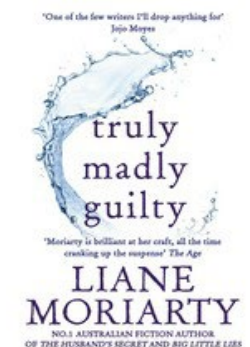


In the spring of 2020, Lara's three daughters return to the family's orchard in Northern Michigan. While picking cherries, they beg their mother to tell them the story of Peter Duke, a famous actor with whom she shared both a stage and a romance years before at a theater company called Tom Lake. As Lara recalls the past, her daughters examine their own lives and relationship with their mother, and are forced to reconsider the world and everything they thought they knew.

Tom Lake is a meditation on youthful love, married love, and the lives parents have led before their children were born. Both hopeful and elegiac, it explores what it means to be happy even when the world is falling apart. As in all of her novels, Ann Patchett combines compelling narrative artistry with piercing insights into family dynamics. The result is a rich and luminous story, told with profound intelligence and emotional subtlety, that demonstrates once again why she is one of the most revered and acclaimed literary talents working today.

Themes: Romance, Historical Fiction, relationships

Want to read ☐



Truly Madly Guilty - Liane Moriarty - OBOW (2017)

Contemporary Fiction

(300 pages) (MP3, Large Print, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

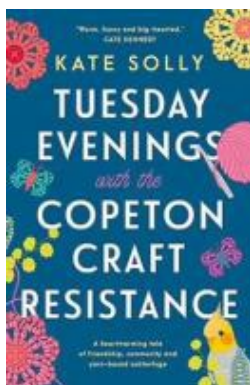


Clementine is haunted by regret. It was just a barbeque. They didn't even know their hosts that well, they were friends of friends. They could so easily have said no. But she and her husband Sam said yes, and now they can never change what they did and didn't do that Sunday afternoon. Six responsible adults. Three cute kids. One playful dog. It's an ordinary weekend in the suburbs. What could possibly go wrong?

Marriage, sex, parenthood, and friendship: Liane Moriarty takes these elements of our lives and shows us how guilt can expose the fault lines in any relationship, and it is not until we appreciate the fragility of life that we can truly value what we have.

Themes: Relationships, friendship, mystery

Want to read ☐



Tuesday Evenings with the Copeton Craft Resistance - Kate Solly

Contemporary Fiction

(316 pages) (eBook available)



Meredith established the Copeton Crochet Collective (no knitters please) because it would be like having friends, only with her in charge, and because there would be no men. It comes as a nasty shock then when Luke, the handsome grandson of no-nonsense Edith, decides to stay and learn to crochet. Claire joins to escape her relentless children and Yasmin so that someone might ask her who she likes on Masterchef instead of asking the same five questions about her hijab.

When plans for a new mosque wake the sleepy town, Copeton is stirred and Islamophobia bubbles to the surface. The Crochet Collective becomes the Craft Resistance, and this motley crew of fibre-arts enthusiasts begins to battle racism and bigotry with colour and creativity. But will the fragile threads of community be enough to bind them when more than one member has something to hide?

Themes: Racism, friendship, Australian, crocheting

Want to read ☐



We Need to Talk About Kevin - Lionel Shriver

Literary Fiction

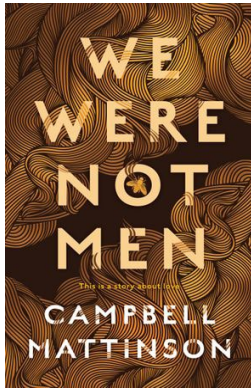
(352 pages) (e-Book available)



Two years ago, Eva Khatchadourian's son, Kevin, murdered seven of his fellow high school students, a cafeteria worker and a popular algebra teacher. Now, in a series of letters to her absent husband, Eva recounts the story of how Kevin came to be Kevin. Fearing that her own shortcomings may have shaped what her son has become, she confesses to a deep, long-standing ambivalence about both motherhood in general and Kevin in particular. How much is her fault? When did it all start to go so wrong—or was it, in fact, ever 'right' at all? Lionel Shriver tells a compelling, absorbing, and resonant story while framing the horrifying tableau of teenage carnage as a metaphor for the larger tragedy—the tragedy of a country where everything works, nobody starves and anything can be bought but a sense of purpose.

Themes: School shooting, murder, motherhood, psychology

Want to read ☐



We Were Not Men - Campbell Mattinson

Contemporary Fiction

(352 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

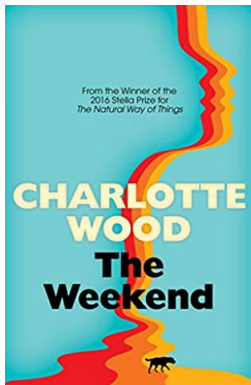


This is a story about love.

Love for nine-year-old twins Jon and Eden Hardacre is simple. Their mum, the creek that they swim in, each other – this is the love that they trust, love as clear and pure as sunlight, as honey, as water. But then there's a terrible accident. And in its wake, they develop a desperation – a yearning – to outgrow tragedy. They get older, compete with each other, fall in love with the same girl, and begin to realise that their lives – and who they love – demand something more. Something deeper. Richer.

Themes: Coming of age, relationships, families, grief

Want to read



The Weekend - Charlotte Wood - OBOW (2020)

Literary Fiction

(272 pages) (MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



Four older women have a lifelong friendship of the best kind: loving, practical, frank, and steadfast. But when Sylvie dies, the ground shifts dangerously for the remaining three. They are Jude, a once-famous restaurateur; Wendy, an acclaimed public intellectual; and Adele, a renowned actress now mostly out of work. Struggling to recall exactly why they've remained close all these years, the grieving women gather at Sylvie's old beach house—not for festivities this time, but to clean it out before it is sold. Can they survive together without her?

Without Sylvie to maintain the group's delicate equilibrium, frustrations build and painful memories press in. Fraying tempers, an elderly dog, unwelcome guests and too much wine collide in a storm that brings long-buried hurts to the surface—and threatens to sweep away their friendship for good.

Themes: Australian fiction, grief, ageing, female friendships

Want to read



When Things Are Alive, They Hum - Hannah Bent

Contemporary Fiction

(384 pages) (e-Book available)



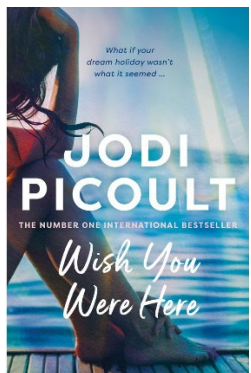
It is a novel that celebrates life in all its guises, and what comes after.

Marlowe and Harper share a bond deeper than most sisters, shaped by the loss of their mother in childhood. For Harper, living with what she calls the Up syndrome and gifted with an endless capacity for wonder, Marlowe and she are connected by an invisible thread, like the hum that connects all things. For Marlowe, they are bound by her fierce determination to keep Harper, born with a congenital heart disorder, alive.

Now 25, Marlowe is finally living her own life abroad, pursuing her studies of a rare species of butterfly secure in the knowledge Harper's happiness is complete, having found love with boyfriend, Louis. But then she receives the devastating call that Harper's heart is failing. She needs a heart transplant but is denied one by the medical establishment because she is living with a disability. Marlowe rushes to her childhood home in Hong Kong to be by Harper's side and soon has to answer the question – what lengths would you go to save your sister?

Themes: Family, disability, grief, sisters

Want to read



Wish You Were Here - Jodi Picoult

Contemporary Fiction

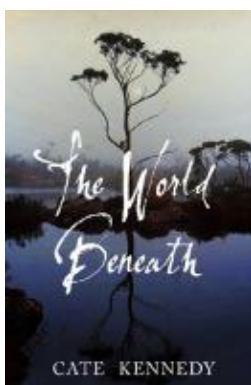
(336 pages) (e-Book available)



Diana O'Toole is perfectly on track. She will be married by thirty, done having kids by thirty-five, and move out to the New York City suburbs, all while climbing the professional ladder in the cutthroat art auction world. She's not engaged just yet, but she knows her boyfriend, Finn, a surgical resident, is about to propose on their romantic getaway to the Galápagos—days before her thirtieth birthday. Right on time. But then a virus that felt worlds away has appeared in the city, and on the eve of their departure, Finn breaks the news: It's all hands on deck at the hospital. He has to stay behind. You should still go, he assures her, since it would be a shame for all of their nonrefundable trip to go to waste. And so, reluctantly, she goes. Almost immediately, Diana's dream vacation goes awry. The whole island is now under quarantine, and she is stranded until the borders reopen. Completely isolated, she must venture beyond her comfort zone. Slowly, she carves out a connection with a local family when a teenager with a secret opens up to Diana, despite her father's suspicion of outsiders. Diana finds herself examining her relationships, her choices, and herself—and wondering if when she goes home, she too will have evolved into someone completely different.

Themes: Covid-19 pandemic, identity, life changing events

Want to read



The World Beneath - Cate Kennedy

Literary Fiction

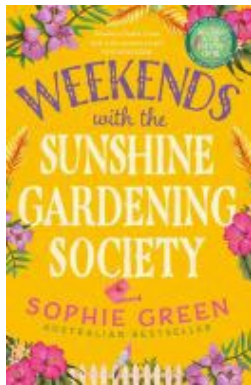
(342 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



Once, Rich and Sandy were environmental activists, part of a world-famous blockade in Tasmania to save the wilderness. Now, twenty-five years later, they have both settled into the uncomfortable compromises of middle age - although they've gone about it in very different ways. About the only thing they have in common is their fifteen-year-old daughter, Sophie. When the perennially restless Rich decides to take Sophie, whom he hardly knows, on a trek into the Tasmanian wilderness, his overconfidence and her growing disillusion with him set off a chain of events that no one could have predicted. Instead of respect, Rich finds antagonism in his relationship with Sophie; and in the vast landscape he once felt an affinity for, he encounters nothing but disorientation and fear. Ultimately all three characters will learn that if they are to survive, each must traverse not only the secret territories that lie between them but also those within themselves.

Themes: Australian, dysfunctional families, environmental activism, Tasmania

Want to read



Weekends with the Sunshine Gardening Society - Sophie Green

Fiction

(426 pages)

Noosa Heads, 1987: Newly-divorced Cynthia has returned to her hometown from Los Angeles to reconnect with her 19-year-old daughter, who is pregnant and determined not listen to her mother's advice. Cynthia's former best friend Lorraine has been stuck mowing lawns as part of a business she shares with her husband - his dream, not hers. When Cynthia convinces Lorraine to join the local Sunshine Gardening Society, they meet young widow Elizabeth, and rootless, heartbroken Kathy.

The four women soon discover the society is much more than an opportunity to chat about flowers. Rather, it offers them the chance to lend a helping hand to people whose lives need a bit of care and attention right along with their gardens.

Themes: Women, relationships, Australian, heart-warming

Want to read



Yellowface - R.F. Kuang

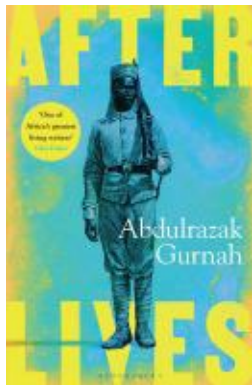
Contemporary Fiction

(323 pages) (eBook available)

Authors June Hayward and Athena Liu were supposed to be twin rising stars: same year at Yale, same debut year in publishing. But Athena's a cross-genre literary darling, and June didn't even get a paperback release. Nobody wants stories about basic white girls, June thinks. So when June witnesses Athena's death in a freak accident, she acts on impulse: she steals Athena's just-finished masterpiece, an experimental novel about the unsung contributions of Chinese laborers to the British and French war efforts during World War I. So what if June edits Athena's novel and sends it to her agent as her own work? So what if she lets her new publisher rebrand her as Juniper Song—complete with an ambiguously ethnic author photo? Doesn't this piece of history deserve to be told, whoever the teller? That's what June claims, and the New York Times bestseller list seems to agree. But June can't get away from Athena's shadow, and emerging evidence threatens to bring June's (stolen) success down around her. As June races to protect her secret, she discovers exactly how far she will go to keep what she thinks she deserves.

Themes: Cultural appropriation, publishing industry, racism, Asian literature

Want to read



After Lives - Abdulrazak Gurnah

Historical Fiction

(275 pages) [\(Large Print available\)](#)

Restless, ambitious Ilyas was stolen from his parents by the Schutztruppe askari, the German colonial troops; after years away, he returns to his village to find his parents gone, and his sister Afiya given away. Hamza was not stolen, but was sold; he has come of age in the schutztruppe, at the right hand of an officer whose control has ensured his protection but marked him for life. The century is young. The Germans and the British and the French and the Belgians and whoever else have drawn their maps and signed their treaties and divided up Africa. As they seek complete dominion they are forced to extinguish revolt after revolt by the colonised. The conflict in Europe opens another arena in east Africa where a brutal war devastates the landscape. Hamza does not have words for how the war ended for him. Returning to the town of his childhood, all he wants is work, however humble, and security - and the beautiful Afiya. As these interlinked friends and survivors come and go, live and work and fall in love, the shadow of a new war lengthens and darkens, ready to snatch them up and carry them away.

Themes: Tanzania, war, crime, relationships, Noble Laureate

[Want to read](#)



The Air Raid Book Club - Annie Lyons

Historical Fiction

(371 pages)

As the bombs began to fall, the book club kept their hopes alive...

London, 1938. Bookseller Gertie Bingham is facing difficult times, having just lost her beloved husband, Harry, and with a lingering sadness at never having been able to have a child of her own. Struggling to face running the bookshop she and Harry opened together, Gertie is preparing to sell up and move away when she is asked if she would be willing to take in a young Jewish refugee from Germany. Gertie is unsure and when sullen teenager Hedy Fischer arrives, Gertie fears she has nothing left to give the troubled girl.

But when the German bombers come and the lights go out over London, Gertie and Hedy realise that joining forces will make them stronger, and that books have the power to bring young and old together and unite a community in need in its darkest hour...

Themes: Books and reading, teenage and Jewish refugees, WWII, London

[Want to read](#)



All Our Shimmering Skies - Trent Dalton

Historical Fiction

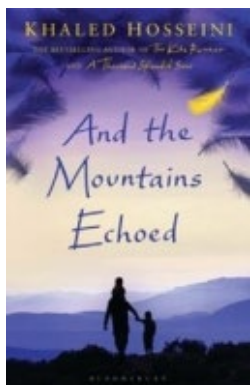
(436 pages) [\(e-Book and e-Audiobook available\)](#)

Darwin, 1942, and as Japanese bombs rain down, motherless Molly Hook, the gravedigger's daughter, turns once again to the sky for guidance. She carries a stone heart inside a duffel bag next to the map that leads to Longcoat Bob, the deep-country sorcerer who put a curse on her family. By her side are the most unlikely travelling companions: Greta, a razor-tongued actress and Yukio, a fallen Japanese fighter pilot. *Run, Molly, run*, says the daytime sky. Run to the vine forests. Run to northern Australia's wild and magical monsoon lands. Run to friendship. Run to love. Run. Because the graverobber's coming, Molly, and the night-time sky is coming with him. So run, Molly, run.

All Our Shimmering Skies is a story about gifts that fall from the sky, curses we dig from the earth and the secrets we bury inside ourselves. It is an odyssey of true love and grave danger, of darkness and light, of bones and blue skies; a buoyant, beautiful, and magical novel abrim with warmth, wit and wonder; and a love letter to Australia and the art of looking up.

Themes: Australian historical fiction, good and evil, magic realism

[Want to read](#)



And the Mountains Echoed - Khaled Hosseini

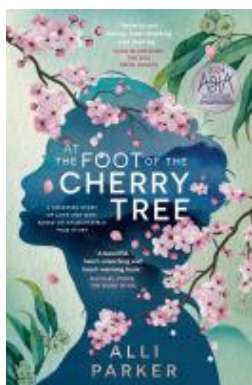
Historical Fiction

(404 pages) [\(MP3, Large Print, e-Book and e-Audiobook available\)](#)

Afghanistan, 1952. Abdullah and his sister Pari live with their father and step-mother in the small village of Shadbagh. Their father, Saboor, is constantly in search of work and they struggle together through poverty and brutal winters. To Abdullah, Pari, as beautiful and sweet-natured as the fairy for which she was named, is everything. More like a parent than a brother, Abdullah will do anything for her, even trading his only pair of shoes for a feather for her treasured collection. Each night they sleep together in their cot, their skulls touching, their limbs tangled. One day the siblings journey across the desert to Kabul with their father. Pari and Abdullah have no sense of the fate that awaits them there, for the event which unfolds will tear their lives apart; sometimes a finger must be cut to save the hand. Crossing generations and continents, moving from Kabul, to Paris, to San Francisco, to the Greek island of Tinos, with profound wisdom, depth, insight and compassion, Khaled Hosseini writes about the bonds that define us and shape our lives, the ways that we help our loved ones in need, how the choices we make resonate through history, and how we are often surprised by the people closest to us.

Themes: Families, brothers and sisters, Middle East, adoption, poverty

[Want to read](#)



At the Foot of the Cherry Tree - Alli Parker

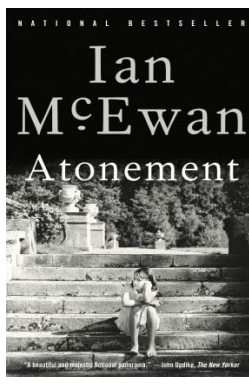
Historical Romance

(324 pages) [\(e-Book and e-Audiobook available\)](#)

Gordon Parker is an eager eighteen-year-old Australian boy desperate to fight for his country, and Nobuko 'Cherry' Sakuramoto is a sixteen-year-old girl struggling to survive in Japan in the aftermath of World War II. But when they fall in love, they change the course of history. When Gordon arrives in Japan, he expects ruthless samurai, angry Japanese men ready to kill Australians at every corner. Instead, he finds Cherry, terrified of ex-enemy soldiers, a survivor of the atomic bomb. Against all the rules and all the odds, they fall in love. But when Gordon discovers the White Australia Policy prevents Cherry coming home with him as his war bride, he does what any 20-year-old soldier would do. He vows to fight. Leaving Cherry alone and pregnant in post-war Japan, Gordon has to convince his family to accept his marriage and wage a desperate campaign against a xenophobic and war-scarred government to allow his wife and children to come home.

Themes: Romance, relationships, Japan

[Want to read](#)



Atonement - Ian McEwan

Historical Romance

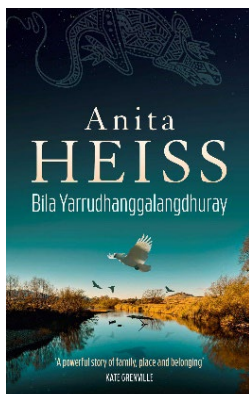
(384 pages)

Ian McEwan's symphonic novel of love and war, childhood and class, guilt and forgiveness provides all the satisfaction of a brilliant narrative and the provocation we have come to expect from this master of English prose.

On a hot summer day in 1935, thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis witnesses the flirtation between her older sister, Cecilia, and Robbie Turner, the son of a servant. But Briony's incomplete grasp of adult motives and her precocious imagination bring about a crime that will change all their lives, a crime whose repercussions Atonement follows through the chaos and carnage of World War II and into the close of the twentieth century.

Themes: War, romance, relationships, forgiveness

[Want to read](#)



Bila Yarrudhanggalangdhuray - Anita Heiss

Historical Fiction

(416 pages) *(e-Book and e-Audiobook available)*

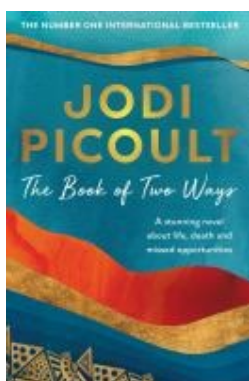
A powerful story of family, place and belonging...The powerful Murrumbidgee River surges through town leaving death and destruction in its wake. It is a stark reminder that while the river can give life, it can just as easily take it away.

Wagadhaany is one of the lucky ones. She survives. But is her life now better than the fate she escaped? Forced to move away from her miyagan, she walks through each day with no trace of dance in her step, her broken heart forever calling her back home to Gundagai.

When she meets Wiradyuri stockman Yindyamarra, Wagadhaany's heart slowly begins to heal. But still, she dreams of a better life, away from the degradation of being owned. She longs to set out along the river of her ancestors, in search of lost family and country. Can she find the courage to defy the White man's law? And if she does, will it bring hope... or heartache?

Themes: Indigenous identity, class, discrimination, relationships

[Want to read](#)



The Book of Two Ways - Jodi Picoult

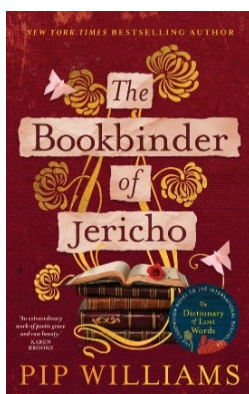
Historical Fiction

(417 pages) *(MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)*

Everything changes in a single moment for Dawn Edelstein. She's on a plane when the flight attendant makes an announcement: prepare for a crash landing. She braces herself as thoughts flash through her mind. The shocking thing is, the thoughts are not of her husband, but a man she last saw fifteen years ago: Wyatt Armstrong. Dawn, miraculously, survives the crash, but so do all the doubts that have suddenly been raised. She has led a good life. Back in Boston, there is her husband, Brian, her beloved daughter, and her work as a death doula, where she helps ease the transition between life and death for her clients. But somewhere in Egypt is Wyatt Armstrong, who works as an archaeologist unearthing ancient burial sites, a job she once studied for, but was forced to abandon when life suddenly intervened. And now, when it seems that fate is offering her second chances, she is not as sure of the choice she once made.

Themes: Love, grief, memory, archaeology

[Want to read](#)



The Bookbinder of Jericho - Pip Williams

Historical Fiction

(488 pages) *(Large Print, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)*

What is lost when knowledge is withheld? In 1914, when the war draws the young men of Britain away to fight, it is the women who must keep the nation running. Two of those women are Peggy and Maude, twin sisters who work in the bindery at Oxford University Press in Jericho. Peggy is intelligent, ambitious and dreams of studying at Oxford University, but for most of her life she has been told her job is to bind the books, not read them. Maude, meanwhile, wants nothing more than what she has. She is extraordinary but vulnerable. Peggy needs to watch over her.

When refugees arrive from the devastated cities of Belgium, it sends ripples through the community and through the sisters' lives. Peggy begins to see the possibility of another future where she can use her intellect and not just her hands, but as war and illness reshape her world, it is love, and the responsibility that comes with it, that threaten to hold her back.

Themes: History, WWI, Oxford, books and books, women

[Want to read](#)



The Butterfly Collector - Tea Cooper

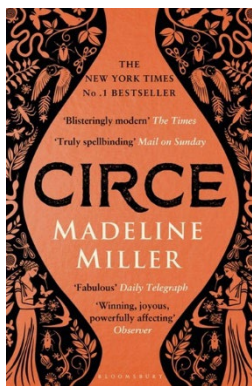
Historical Fiction

(400 pages) *(Large Print and e-Book available)*

1868 Morpeth Theodora Breckenridge, still in mourning after the loss of her parents and brother at sea, is more interested in working quietly on her art at the family's country estate than she is finding a husband in Sydney society, even if her elder sister Florence has other ideas. Theodora seeks to emulate prestigious nature illustrators, the Scott sisters, who lived nearby, so she cannot believe her luck when she discovers a butterfly never before sighted in Australia. With the help of Clarrie, her maid, and her beautiful illustrations, she is poised to make a natural science discovery that will put her name on the map. Then Clarrie's new-born son goes missing and everything changes. 1922 Sydney When would-be correspondent Verity Binks is sent an anonymous parcel containing a spectacular butterfly costume and an invitation to the Sydney Artists Masquerade Ball on the same day she loses her job at The Arrow, she is both baffled and determined to go. Her late grandfather Sid, an esteemed newspaperman, would expect no less of her. At the ball, she lands a juicy commission to write the history of the Treadwell Foundation - an institution that supports disgraced young women and their babies. But as she begins to dig, her investigation quickly leads her to an increasingly dark and complex mystery, a mystery fifty years in the making.

Themes: Nature, mystery, relationships

[Want to read](#)



Circe - Madeline Miller

Fantasy/Historical

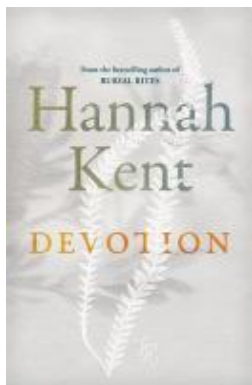
(393 pages) [\(Large Print and e-Book available\)](#)

In the house of Helios, god of the sun and mightiest of the Titans, a daughter is born. But Circe is a strange child--neither powerful like her father nor viciously alluring like her mother. Turning to the world of mortals for companionship, she discovers that she does possess power: the power of witchcraft, which can transform rivals into monsters and menace the gods themselves.

There is danger, too, for a woman who stands alone, and Circe unwittingly draws the wrath of both men and gods, ultimately finding herself pitted against one of the most terrifying and vengeful of the Olympians. To protect what she loves most, Circe must summon all her strength and choose, once and for all, whether she belongs with the gods she is born from or with the mortals she has come to love.

Themes: Greek mythology, retellings, feminism

[Want to read](#)



Devotion - Hannah Kent

Historical fiction

(432 pages) [\(e-Book available\)](#)

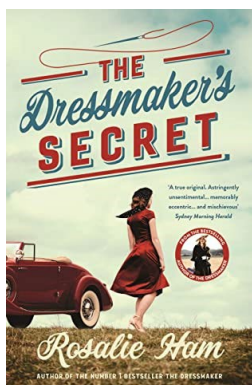
Prussia, 1836. Hanne is nearly fifteen and the domestic world of womanhood is quickly closing in on her. A child of nature, she yearns instead for the rush of the river, the wind dancing around her. Hanne finds little comfort in the local girls and friendship doesn't come easily, until she meets Thea and she finds in her a kindred spirit and finally, acceptance.

Hanne's family are Old Lutherans, and in her small village hushed worship is done secretly - this is a community under threat. But when they are granted safe passage to Australia, the community rejoices.

It's a promise of freedom that will have devastating consequences for Hanne and Thea, but, on that long and brutal journey, their bond proves too strong for even nature to break.

Themes: LGBTQIA, South Australia, Prussia, immigration

[Want to read](#)



The Dressmaker's Secret - Rosalie Ham - OBOW (2021)

Historical fiction

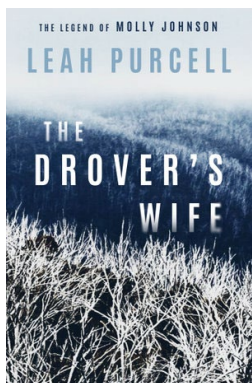
(378 pages) [\(e-Book and e-Audiobook available\)](#)

It is 1953 and Melbourne society is looking forward to coronation season, the grand balls and celebrations for the young queen-to-be. Tilly Dunning is, however, working for a pittance in a second-rate Collins Street salon. Her talents go unappreciated, and the madame is a bully and a cheat, but Tilly has a past she is desperate to escape and good reason to prefer anonymity.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Farrat and the McSwiney clan have been searching for their resident dressmaker ever since she left Dungatar in flames. And they aren't the only ones. The inhabitants of the town are still out for revenge (or at least someone to foot the bill for the new high street). So when Tilly's name starts to feature in the fashion pages, the jig is up. Along with Tilly's hopes of keeping her secrets hidden...

Themes: Revenge, family, love

[Want to read](#)



The Drover's Wife - Leah Purcell

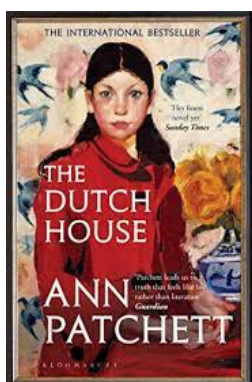
Historical Fiction

(372 pages) [\(DVD, e-Book and e-Audiobook available\)](#)

Tarantino meets Deadwood in this full-throttle drama of our colonial past, written by the indomitable Leah Purcell. Henry Lawson's story of the Drover's Wife pits the stoic silhouette of a woman against the unforgiving Australian landscape, staring down a serpent -- it's our frontier myth captured in a few pages. In Leah's new play the old story gets a very fresh rewrite. Once again the Drover's Wife is confronted by a threat in her yard in Australia's high country, but now it's a man. He's bleeding, he's got secrets, and he's black. She knows there's a fugitive wanted for killing whites, and the district is thick with troopers, but something's holding the Drover's Wife back from turning this fella in a taut thriller of our pioneering past, this play is full of fury, power and has a black sting to the tail, reaching from our nation's infancy into our complicated present. (7 male, 1 female).

Themes: Fantasy, colonial influence, Indigenous Australians, drama

[Want to read](#)



The Dutch House - Ann Patchett

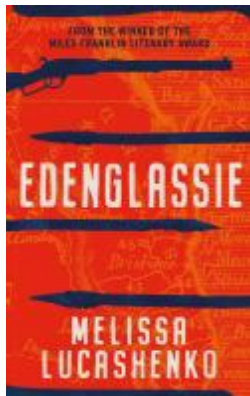
Historical fiction

(337 pages) [\(e-Book available\)](#)

At the end of the Second World War, Cyril Conroy combines luck and a single canny investment to begin an enormous real estate empire, propelling his family from poverty to enormous wealth. His first order of business is to buy the Dutch House, a lavish estate in the suburbs outside of Philadelphia. Meant as a surprise for his wife, the house sets in motion the undoing of everyone he loves. The story is told by Cyril's son Danny, as he and his older sister, the brilliantly acerbic and self-assured Maeve, are exiled from the house where they grew up by their stepmother. The two wealthy siblings are thrown back into the poverty their parents had escaped from and find that all they have to count on is one another. It is this unshakable bond between them that both saves their lives and thwarts their futures. Set over the course of five decades, The Dutch House is a dark fairy tale about two smart people who cannot overcome their past. Despite every outward sign of success, Danny and Maeve are only truly comfortable when they're together. Throughout their lives, they return to the well-worn story of what they've lost with humor and rage. But when at last they're forced to confront the people who left them behind, the relationship between an indulged brother and his ever-protective sister is finally tested.

Themes: Family, American fiction, coming of age

[Want to read](#)



Edenglassie - Melissa Lucashenko

Historical Fiction

(320 pages) (e-Book available)

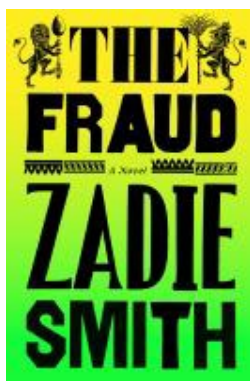
When Mulanyin meets the beautiful Nita in Edenglassie, their saltwater people still outnumber the British. As colonial unrest peaks, Mulanyin dreams of taking his bride home to Yugambah Country, but his plans for independence collide with white justice.

Two centuries later, fiery activist Winona meets Dr Johnny. Together they care for obstinate centenarian Granny Eddie, and sparks fly, but not always in the right direction. What nobody knows is how far the legacies of the past will reach into their modern lives.

In this brilliant epic, Melissa Lucashenko torches Queensland's colonial myths, while reimagining an Australian future.

Themes: Indigenous, relationships, romance, injustice

[Want to read](#)



The Fraud – Zadie Smith

Historical Fiction

(455 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Kilburn, 1873. The 'Tichborne Trial' has captivated the widowed Scottish housekeeper Mrs Eliza Touchet and all of England. Readers are at odds over whether the defendant is who he claims to be - or an imposter. Mrs Touchet is a woman of many interests- literature, justice, abolitionism, class, her novelist cousin and his wives, this life and the next. But she is also sceptical. She suspects England of being a land of fa ades, in which nothing is quite what it seems.

Andrew Bogle meanwhile finds himself the star witness, his future depending on telling the right story. Growing up enslaved on the Hope Plantation, Jamaica, he knows every lump of sugar comes at a human cost. That the rich deceive the poor. And that people are more easily manipulated than they realise.

Based on real historical events, The Fraud is a dazzling novel about how in a world of hypocrisy and self-deception, deciding what's true can prove a complicated task.

Themes: Literary, Historical fiction, local connection

[Want to read](#)



The Fragments - Toni Jordan

Historical fiction

(308 pages) (MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

When the beautiful, reclusive Inga Karlson died in a fire in New York in 1939, she left behind three things: a phenomenally successful first novel, the scorched fragments of a second book and a mystery that has captivated generations of fans.

Nearly half a century later one of those fans, Brisbane bookseller Caddie Walker, is waiting in line for an exhibition. The famous Karlson fragments are in town. For Caddie, this is the biggest thing ever to hit Brisbane. But it's a chance encounter in the queue—a conversation with a stranger—that will change her life. Incredibly, it seems someone in this overgrown country town knows something new about the fragments. Caddie is electrified. Jolted from her sleepy, no-worries life, she is driven to find the clues that will unlock the greatest literary mystery of the twentieth century.

Themes: Writing, mystery, Brisbane

[Want to read](#)



The Forthright Woman - Darry Fraser

Historical Fiction

(448 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

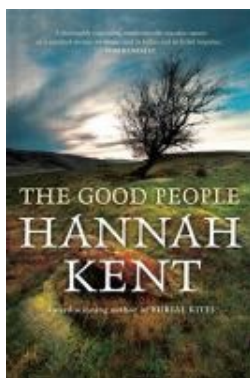
1898, South Australia - At the gateway to the Flinders Ranges lies Kanyaka Station, once a thriving sheep and cattle property, now abandoned and in ruins. But a discovery in her late mother's papers draws recently widowed Marcella Ross out to its remote landscape in search of clues to the disappearance of her Uncle Luca, an Italian immigrant whose fate seems to have been bound up in that of his mysterious partner - also long-since vanished. When Marcella is accosted by a daunting stranger, she discovers he too is entangled in the secrets of the past. Tragedy and obsession threaten Marcella's fragile independence, so how far will she have to go to unlock the secrets of Kanyaka - or solve the puzzle of her own future?

1955 - After learning that they are unlikely to have children, Frances and Joe MacDonald have taken the unusual step of buying a caravan and travelling together through the outback. They stop at Kanyaka Station, where Fran becomes mesmerised by the past. Family lore holds that an ancestor met an untimely end amid the desolate ruins. But what truly happened, and to whom, at the isolated station? As fate alters the course of her life, Fran's footsteps echo another woman's from so long ago ...

As the mystery unravels, will these two women have the chance to take control of their own destinies?

Themes: Australian, duel timeline, relationships, mystery, family

[Want to read](#)



The Good People - Hannah Kent

Historical fiction

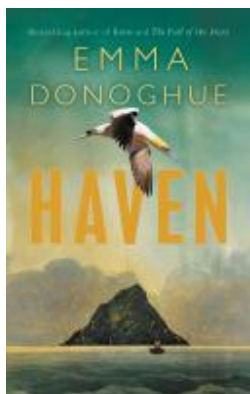
(386 pages) (MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Nóra Leahy has lost her daughter and her husband in the same year, and is now burdened with the care of her four-year-old grandson, Micheál. The boy cannot walk, or speak, and Nora, mistrustful of the tongues of gossips, has kept the child hidden from those who might see in his deformity evidence of otherworldly interference.

Unable to care for the child alone, Nóra hires a fourteen-year-old servant girl, Mary, who soon hears the whispers in the valley about the blasted creature causing grief to fall upon the widow's house. Alone, hedged in by rumour, Mary and her mistress seek out the only person in the valley who might be able to help Micheál. For although her neighbours are wary of her, it is said that old Nance Roche has the knowledge. That she consorts with Them, the Good People. And that only she can return those whom they have taken...

Themes: Loss, superstition, tradition

[Want to read](#)



Haven - Emma Donoghue

Historical Fiction

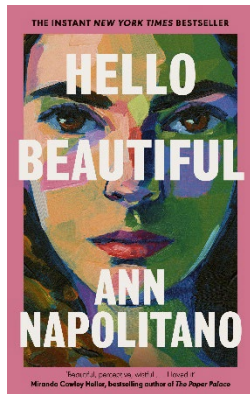
(256 pages) (MP3, eBook and e-Audiobook available)



Three men vow to leave the world behind them. They set out in a small boat for an island their leader has seen in a dream, with only faith to guide them. What they find is the extraordinary island now known as Skellig Michael. Haven, Emma Donoghue's gripping and moving novel, has her trademark psychological intensity - but this story is like nothing she has ever written before. In seventh-century Ireland, a scholar and priest called Artt has a dream telling him to leave the sinful world behind. Taking two monks - young Trian and old Cormac - he rows down the river Shannon in search of an isolated spot on which to found a monastery. Drifting out into the Atlantic, the three men find an impossibly steep, bare island, inhabited by tens of thousands of birds, and claim it for God. In such a place, what will survival mean?

Themes: Ireland, history, monks, survival

Want to read



Hello Beautiful - Ann Napolitano

Historical Fiction

(387 pages) (eBook available)

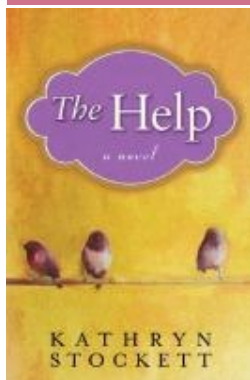


Best friends and sisters, the four Padavano girls bring loving chaos to their close-knit Italian American neighbourhood. William Waters grew up in a house silenced by tragedy, where his parents could hardly bear to look at him, much less love him. So, when he meets the spirited and ambitious Julia Padavano, it's as if the world has lit up around him.

With Julia comes her family: Sylvie, the family's dreamer, is happiest with her nose in a book; Cecelia is a free-spirited artist; and Emeline patiently takes care of them all. But when darkness from William's past begins to block the light of his future, it is Sylvie, not Julia, who becomes his closest confidante. The result is a catastrophic rift that leaves the family inhabiting two sides of a fault line. Can they find their way back to each other? Can love make a broken family whole?

Themes: Family saga, romance, relationships, mental illness

Want to read



The Help - Kathryn Stockett

Historical fiction

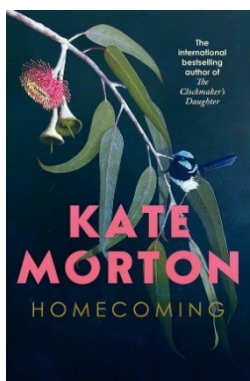
(451 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



Twenty-two-year-old Skeeter has just returned home. She may have a degree, but it is 1962, Mississippi, and her mother will not be happy till Skeeter has a ring on her finger. Skeeter would normally find solace with her beloved maid Constantine, the woman who raised her, but Constantine has disappeared and no one will tell Skeeter where she has gone. Aibileen is a black maid, a wise, regal woman raising her seventeenth white child. Something has shifted inside her after the loss of her own son, who died while his bosses looked the other way. She is devoted to the little girl she looks after, though she knows both their hearts may be broken. Minny, Aibileen's best friend, is short, fat, and perhaps the sassiest woman in Mississippi. She can look like nobody's business, but she can't mind her tongue, so she's lost yet another job. Minny finally finds a position working for someone too new to town to know her reputation. But her new boss has secrets of her own. Seemingly as different from one another as can be, these women will nonetheless come together for a clandestine project that will put them all at risk. And why? Because they are suffocating within the lines that define their town and their times. And sometimes lines are made to be crossed.

Themes: Racism, loss, revenge

Want to read



Homecoming - Kate Morton

Historical Fiction

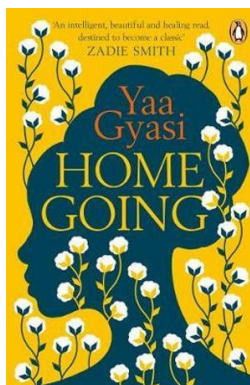
(488 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



Adelaide Hills, Christmas Eve, 1959: At the end of a scorching hot day, beside a creek in the grounds of the grand and mysterious mansion, a local delivery man makes a terrible discovery. A police investigation is called and a small town becomes embroiled in one of the most shocking and perplexing murder cases in the history of South Australia. Sixty years later, Jess is a journalist in search of a story. Having lived and worked in London for almost twenty years, she now finds herself laid off from her full-time job and struggling to make ends meet. A phone call out of nowhere summons her back to Sydney, where her beloved grandmother, Nora, who raised Jess when her mother could not, has suffered a fall and been readmitted to the hospital. At a loose end in Nora's house, Jess does some digging of her own. In Nora's bedroom, she discovers a true crime book, chronicling the police investigation into a long-buried tragedy: the Turner Family Tragedy of Christmas Eve, 1959. It is only when Jess skims through the book that she finds a shocking connection between her own family and this once-infamous crime - a crime that has never been resolved satisfactorily. And for a journalist without a story, a cold case might be the best distraction she can find...

Themes: Australian, mystery/thriller, family relations, murder

Want to read



Homegoing - Yaa Gyasi

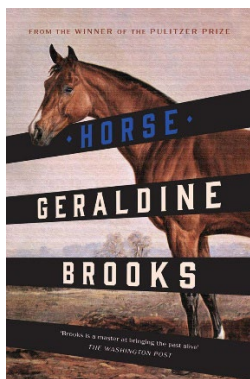
Historical Fiction

(305 pages) (Large Print book available)

Two half-sisters, Effia and Esi, are born into different villages in eighteenth-century Ghana. Effia is married off to an Englishman and lives in comfort in the palatial rooms of Cape Coast Castle. Unbeknownst to Effia, her sister, Esi, is imprisoned beneath her in the castle's dungeons, sold with thousands of others into the Gold Coast's booming slave trade, and shipped off to America, where her children and grandchildren will be raised in slavery. One thread of *Homegoing* follows Effia's descendants through centuries of warfare in Ghana, as the Fante and Asante nations wrestle with the slave trade and British colonization. The other thread follows Esi and her children into America. From the plantations of the South to the Civil War and the Great Migration, from the coal mines of Pratt City, Alabama, to the jazz clubs and dope houses of twentieth-century Harlem, right up through the present day, *Homegoing* makes history visceral, and captures, with singular and stunning immediacy, how the memory of captivity came to be inscribed in the soul of a nation.

Themes: Family saga, slavery, Ghana, African American

Want to read



Horse - Geraldine Brooks

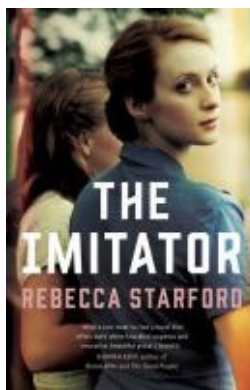
Historical Fiction

(401 pages)

Kentucky, 1850. An enslaved groom named Jarret and a bay foal forge a bond of understanding that will carry the horse to record-setting victories across the South. When the nation erupts in civil war, an itinerant young artist who has made his name on paintings of the racehorse takes up arms for the Union. On a perilous night, he reunites with the stallion and his groom, very far from the glamor of any racetrack. New York City, 1954. Martha Jackson, a gallery owner celebrated for taking risks on edgy contemporary painters, becomes obsessed with a 19th-century equestrian oil painting of mysterious provenance. Washington, DC, 2019. Jess, a Smithsonian scientist from Australia, and Theo, a Nigerian-American art historian, find themselves unexpectedly connected through their shared interest in the horse—one studying the stallion's bones for clues to his power and endurance, the other uncovering the lost history of the unsung Black horsemen who were critical to his racing success.

Themes: Horses, slavery, art, inspired by true events

[Want to read](#)



The Imitator - Rebecca Starford

Historical fiction

(344 pages)

Out of place at boarding school, scholarship girl Evelyn Varley realises that the only way for her to fit in is to be like everyone else. She hides her true self and what she really thinks behind the manners and attitudes of those around her. By the time she graduates from Oxford University in 1939, ambitious and brilliant Evelyn has perfected her performance. War is looming. Evelyn soon finds herself recruited to MI5, and the elite counter-intelligence department of Bennett White, the enigmatic spy-runner. Recognising Evelyn's mercurial potential, White schools her in observation and subterfuge and assigns her the dangerous task of infiltrating an underground group of Nazi sympathisers working to form an alliance with Germany. But befriending people to betray them isn't easy, no matter how dark their intent. Evelyn is drawn deeper into a duplicity of her own making, where truth and lies intertwine, and her increasing distrust of everyone, including herself, begins to test her better judgement. When a close friend becomes dangerously ensnared in her mission, Evelyn's loyalty is pushed to breaking point, forcing her to make an impossible decision.

Themes: Espionage, World War II, loyalty,

[Want to read](#)



The Kitchen House - Kathleen Grissom

Historical Fiction

(369 pages)

When a white servant girl violates the order of plantation society, she unleashes a tragedy that exposes the worst and best in the people she has come to call her family. Orphaned while onboard ship from Ireland, seven-year-old Lavinia arrives on the steps of a tobacco plantation where she is to live and work with the slaves of the kitchen house. Under the care of Belle, the master's illegitimate daughter, Lavinia becomes deeply bonded to her adopted family, though she is set apart from them by her white skin.

Eventually, Lavinia is accepted into the world of the big house, where the master is absent and the mistress battles opium addiction. Lavinia finds herself perilously straddling two very different worlds. When she is forced to make a choice, loyalties are brought into question, dangerous truths are laid bare, and lives are put at risk.

Themes: Family, tragedy, suspense, love and loyalty

[Want to read](#)



Lady Tan's Circle of Women - Lisa See

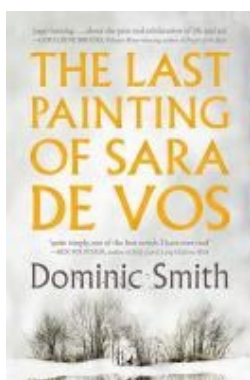
Historical Fiction

(368 pages)

In 15th century China two women are born under the same sign, the Metal Snake. But life will take the friends on very different paths. According to Confucius, 'an educated woman is a worthless woman', but Tan Yunxian – born into an elite family, yet haunted by death, separation and loneliness – is being raised by her grandparents to be of use. She begins her training in medicine with her grandmother and, as she navigates the male world of medicine, requiring tact and diplomacy, she struggles against the confining world of her class. From a young age, Yunxian learns about women's illnesses, many of which relate to childbearing, alongside a young midwife-in-training, Meiling. The two girls find fast friendship and a mutual purpose – despite the prohibition that a doctor should never touch blood while a midwife comes in frequent contact with it – and they vow to be forever friends, sharing in each other's joys and struggles. No mud, no lotus, they tell themselves: from adversity beauty can bloom. How might a woman like Yunxian break free of tradition, go on to treat women and girls from every level of society, and lead a life of such importance that many of her remedies are still used five centuries later? How might the power of friendship support or complicate these efforts?

Themes: Ming Dynasty, women, friendship, aristocracy, medicine

[Want to read](#)



The Last Painting of Sara de Vos - Dominic Smith

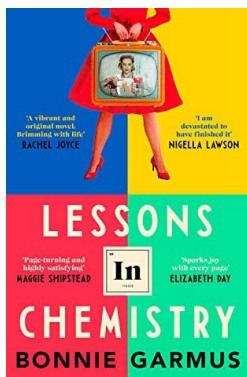
Historical fiction

(374 pages) (MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

In 1631, Sara de Vos is admitted as a master painter to the Guild of St. Luke's in Holland, the first woman to be so recognized. Three hundred years later, only one work attributed to de Vos is known to remain—a haunting winter scene, At the Edge of a Wood, which hangs over the bed of a wealthy descendant of the original owner. An Australian grad student, Ellie Shipley, struggling to stay afloat in New York, agrees to paint a forgery of the landscape, a decision that will haunt her. Because now, half a century later, she's curating an exhibit of female Dutch painters, and both versions threaten to arrive. As the three threads intersect, The Last Painting of Sara de Vos mesmerizes while it grapples with the demands of the artistic life, showing how the deceptions of the past can forge the present.

Themes: Marriage, deception, art history

[Want to read](#)



Lessons in Chemistry - Bonnie Garmus

Historical Fiction

(400 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



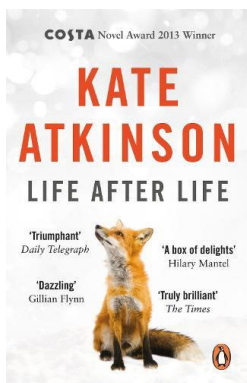
Your ability to change everything - including yourself - starts here. Chemist Elizabeth Zott is not your average woman. In fact, Elizabeth Zott would be the first to point out that there is no such thing.

But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute take a very unscientific view of equality. Except for one: Calvin Evans, the lonely, brilliant, Nobel-prize nominated grudge-holder who falls in love with - of all things - her mind. True chemistry results.

Like science, life is unpredictable. Which is why a few years later, Elizabeth Zott finds herself not only a single mother, but the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show, *Supper at Six*. Elizabeth's unusual approach to cooking ('combine one tablespoon acetic acid with a pinch of sodium chloride') proves revolutionary. But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because as it turns out, Elizabeth Zott isn't just teaching women to cook. She's daring them to change the status quo.

Themes: Romance, feminism, science, cooking, 1960's

Want to read



Life After Life - Kate Atkinson

Historical Fiction

(531 pages) (e-Audiobook available)



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. Here she is at her most profound and inventive, in a novel that celebrates the best and worst of ourselves.

Themes: Parallel lives, family relations, reincarnation

Want to read



Limberlost - Robbie Arnott - OBOW (2023)

Historical Fiction

(226 pages) (eBook and e-Audiobook available)



In the heat of a long summer Ned hunts rabbits in a river valley, hoping the pelts will earn him enough money to buy a small boat.

His two brothers are away at war, their whereabouts unknown. His father and older sister struggle to hold things together on the family orchard, Limberlost.

Desperate to ignore it all--to avoid the future rushing towards him--Ned dreams of open water.

As his story unfolds over the following decades, we see how Ned's choices that summer come to shape the course of his life, the fate of his family and the future of the valley, with its seasons of death and rebirth.

Themes: Australian, Tasmania, coming of age, family, nature

Want to read



London Séance Society - Sarah Penner

Historical Fiction

(352 pages) (eBook available)

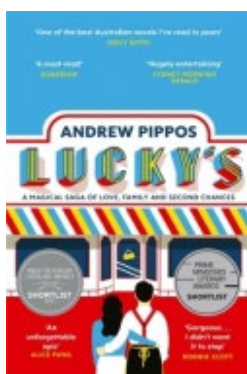


Amid the shrouded parlors of Victorian London, two daring women hunt for truth and justice in the perilous art of conjuring the dead. 1873. At an abandoned château on the outskirts of Paris, a dark séance is about to take place, led by acclaimed spiritualist Vaudeline D'Allaire. Known worldwide for her talent in conjuring the spirits of murder victims to ascertain the identities of the people who killed them, she is highly sought after by widows and investigators alike.

Lenna Wickes has come to Paris to find answers about her sister's death, but to do so, she must embrace the unknown and overcome her own logic-driven bias against the occult. When Vaudeline is beckoned to England to solve a high-profile murder, Lenna accompanies her as an understudy. But as the women team up with the powerful men of London's exclusive Séance Society to solve the mystery, they begin to suspect that they are not merely out to solve a crime, but perhaps entangled in one themselves...

Themes: England, magical realism, romance, murder, secret societies

Want to read



Lucky's - Andrew Pippos

Historical Fiction

(368 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



Lucky's is a story of family. It is also about a man called Lucky. His restaurant chain. A fire that changed everything. A New Yorker article which might save a career. The mystery of a missing father. An impostor who got the girl. An unthinkable tragedy. A roll of the dice. And a story of love—lost, sought and won again (at last). Following a trail of cause and effect that spans decades, this unforgettable epic tells a story about lives bound together by the pursuit of love, family, and new beginnings.

WINNER OF THE READINGS PRIZE FOR NEW AUSTRALIAN FICTION 2021
HIGHLY COMMENDED FOR 2021 ARA HISTORICAL NOVEL PRIZE

Themes: Relationships, Australian, Greek, WWII, immigration

Want to read



My Father's House - Joseph O'Connor

Historical Fiction

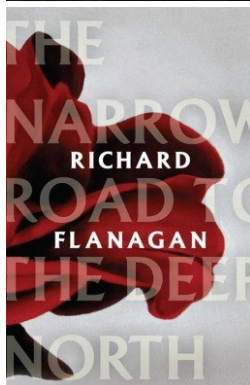
(277 pages)

September 1943: German forces occupy Rome. SS officer Paul Hauptmann rules with terror. The war's outcome is far from certain. An Irish priest, Hugh O'Flaherty, dedicates himself to helping those escaping from the Nazis. His home is Vatican City, the world's smallest state, a neutral, independent country within Rome where the occupiers hold no sway. Here Hugh brings together an unlikely band of friends to hide the vulnerable under the noses of the enemy. But Hauptmann's net begins closing in on the Escape Line and the need for a terrifyingly audacious mission grows critical. By Christmastime, it's too late to turn back.

Based on an extraordinary true story, *My Father's House* is a powerful literary thriller from a master of historical fiction. Joseph O'Connor has created an unforgettable novel of love, faith and sacrifice, and what it means to be truly human in the most extreme circumstances.

Themes: Vatican City, Irish Priest, WWII, based on a true story

Want to read



The Narrow Road to the Deep North - Richard Flanagan

Historical fiction

(480 pages) (MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

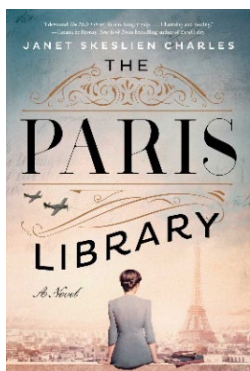


August, 1943. In the despair of a Japanese POW camp on the Thai-Burma death railway, Australian surgeon Dorrigio Evans is haunted by his love affair with his uncle's young wife two years earlier. Struggling to save the men under his command from starvation, from cholera, from beatings, he receives a letter that will change his life forever.

This savagely beautiful novel is a story about the many forms of love and death, of war and truth, as one man comes of age, prospers, only to discover all that he has lost.

Themes: Prisoners of war, World War II, courage

Want to read



The Paris Library - Janet Skeslien Charles

Historical Fiction

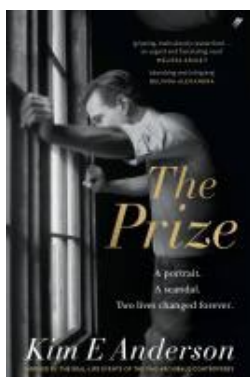
(368 pages)

Paris, 1939: Young and ambitious Odile Souchet has it all: her handsome police officer beau and a dream job at the American Library in Paris. When the Nazis march into Paris, Odile stands to lose everything she holds dear, including her beloved library. Together with her fellow librarians, Odile joins the Resistance with the best weapons she has: books. But when the war finally ends, instead of freedom, Odile tastes the bitter sting of unspeakable betrayal.

Montana, 1983: Lily is a lonely teenager looking for adventure in small-town Montana. Her interest is piqued by her solitary, elderly neighbour. As Lily uncovers more about her neighbour's mysterious past, she finds that they share a love of language, the same longings, and the same intense jealousy, never suspecting that a dark secret from the past connects them.

Themes: World War II, censorship, coming of age

Want to read



The Prize - Kim E. Anderson

Historical Fiction

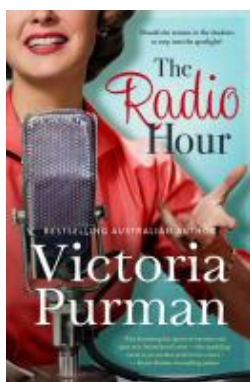
(320 pages)

When two artists enter the 1943 Archibald Prize, a scandal erupts that grips not only the art world, but the nation. A poignant love story with shattering consequences, inspired by real-life events. 'Is that what you want to do? Peer into my soul and capture my flaws, for all to see?'

As World War II draws to a close, Australian society is still deeply conservative. Homosexuality is illegal and the scourge of Modernism is infecting Australian art. When William Dobell paints a portrait of lover and fellow artist Joshua Smith, he is awarded Australia's most prestigious art prize. A protest is lodged by Dobell's competitors who claim the painting is a caricature. Both artist and sitter soon find themselves in the glare of the spotlight when a court case to determine the matter turns into a public spectacle. Bill and Joshua's relationship is put under pressure and at risk of being exposed as they are caught in a world where they must choose between love and art: between acceptance and exile.

Themes: LGBT, Australia art, societal expectations, acceptance

Want to read



Radio Hour - Victoria Purman

Historical Fiction

(380 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



Martha Berry is fifty years old, a spinster, and one of an army of polite and invisible women in 1956 Sydney who go to work each day and get things done without fuss, fanfare or reward. Working at the country's national broadcaster, she's seen highly praised talent come and go over the years but when she is sent to work as a secretary on a brand-new radio serial, created to follow in the footsteps of Australia's longest running show, Blue Hills, she finds herself at the mercy of an egotistical and erratic young producer without a clue, a conservative broadcaster frightened by the word 'pregnant' and a motley cast of actors with ideas of their own about their roles in the show. When Martha is forced to step in to rescue the serial from impending cancellation, she ends up secretly ghost-writing scripts for *As The Sun Sets*, creating mayhem with management, and coming up with storylines that resonate with the serial's growing and loyal audience of women listeners. But she can't keep her secret forever and when she's threatened with exposure, Martha has to decide if she wants to remain in the shadows, or to finally step into the spotlight.

Themes: 1950s Sydney, drama, radio broadcasting

Want to read



The Royal Correspondent - Alexandra Joel

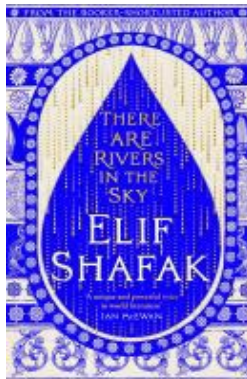
Historical Fiction

(400 pages) (e-Audiobook available)

Breaking into the newspaper business in 1960s Sydney, a competitive world dominated by hard-edged men, isn't easy for a woman. But Blaise Hill is far from ordinary. The only female in *The Clarion's* newsroom, her long-held dream of being a reporter has come true. Blaise isn't chasing stories just to make a name for herself; she's helping support her family and her beloved sister Ivy, whose life has been transformed by polio. But the ambitious young journalist's confidence is shaken when she secretly witnesses the murder of a top crime boss, a death that rocks the Sydney underworld. One of the few people who knows what really happened is the handsome, enigmatic Adam Rule, who helps cover up the murder. When she gets a plum assignment, moving to England, Blaise hopes to put it all behind her. Life is just about perfect until the night she attends Queen Elizabeth's gala. Among the exclusive crowd is the last man she ever wanted to see, Adam Rule. Is Blaise's dark secret coming back to hurt her - or is this the beginning of something far more dangerous?

Themes: Crime, journalism, 1960s London, 1960s Sydney

Want to read ☐



There Are Rivers in the Sky - Elif Shafak

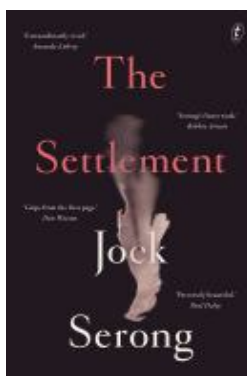
Historical Fiction

(481 pages)

This is the story of one lost poem, two great rivers, and three remarkable lives - all connected by a single drop of water. In the ruins of Nineveh, that ancient city of Mesopotamia, there lies hidden in the sand fragments of a long-forgotten poem, the Epic of Gilgamesh. In Victorian London, an extraordinary child is born at the edge of the dirt-black Thames. Arthur's only chance of escaping poverty is his brilliant memory. When his gift earns him a spot as an apprentice at a printing press, Arthur's world opens up far beyond the slums, with one book soon sending him across the seas: *Nineveh and Its Remains*. In 2014 Turkey, Narin, a Yazidi girl living by the River Tigris, waits to be baptised with water brought from the holy sit of Lish in Iraq. The ceremony is cruelly interrupted, and soon Narin and her grandmother must journey across war-torn lands in the hope of reaching the sacred valley of their people. In 2018 London, broken-hearted Zaleekhah, a hydrologist, moves to a houseboat on the Thames to escape the wreckage of her marriage. Zaleekhah foresees a life drained of all love and meaning - until an unexpected connection to her homeland changes everything.

Themes: Turkey, Victorian England, Gilgamesh, Literary Fiction

Want to read ☐



The Settlement - Jock Serong

Historical Fiction

(302 pages) (e-Book available)

On the windswept point of an island at the edge of van Diemen's Land, the Commandant huddles with a small force of white men and women. He has gathered together, under varying degrees of coercion and duress, the last of the Tasmanians, or so he believes. His purpose is to save them from a number of things, but most pressingly from the murderous intent of the pastoral settlers on their country. The orphans Whelk and Pipi, fighting for their survival against the malevolent old man they know as the Catechist, watch as almost everything about this situation proves resistant to the Commandant's will. The wind, the spread of disease, the strange black dog that floats in on the prow of a wrecked ship... But above all the Chief, the leader of the exiles, before whom the Commandant performs a perverse, intimate dance of violence and betrayal. In *The Settlement*, Jock Serong reimagines in urgent, compelling prose the ill-fated exploits of George Augustus Robinson at the settlement of Wyballena—a venture whose blinkered, self-interested cruelty might stand for the colonial enterprise itself.

Themes: History, Tasmania, racial discrimination

Want to read ☐



Violet Kelly and the Jade Owl - Fiona Britton

Historical Fiction

(286 pages) (e-Book available)

Phryne Fisher meets Underbelly in an arch, out-of-the-box debut historical crime caper. Sydney, 1930: In the well-heeled suburb of Paddington, just a short distance from the razor gangs of Darlinghurst and Kings Cross, sits Maison des Fleurs, an upscale brothel run by the indomitable Madame. The star of Maison des Fleurs is Violet Kelly - beautiful, clever and determined to make something of herself in a world that has already taken so much. When a former associate of Madame's emerges to claim a long-owed favour involving a kidnapped girl and an ancient curse, Violet is drawn into a dangerous game of cat and mouse that takes her from dangerous underworld dealings to raucous parties to untold stories about her own past, and, eventually, right into the heart of Maison des Fleurs. But how much is she willing to risk to save her friends, her home, and the life she's come to love? And will it be enough?

Themes: Mystery, crime, Historical fiction

Want to read ☐



What is Visible - Kimberly Elkins

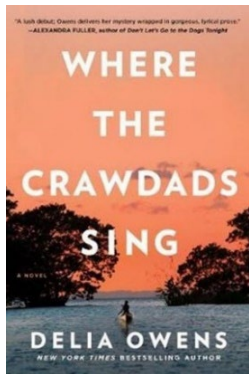
Historical Fiction

(307 pages)

A vividly original literary novel based on the astounding true-life story of Laura Bridgman, the first deaf and blind person who learned language and blazed a trail for Helen Keller. At age two, Laura Bridgman lost four of her five senses to scarlet fever. At age seven, she was taken to Perkins Institute in Boston to determine if a child so terribly afflicted could be taught. At age twelve, Charles Dickens declared her his prime interest for visiting America. And by age twenty, she was considered the nineteenth century's second most famous woman, having mastered language and charmed the world with her brilliance. Not since *The Diving Bell* and *The Butterfly* has a book proven so profoundly moving in illuminating the challenges of living in a completely unique inner world. With Laura—by turns mischievous, temperamental, and witty—as the book's primary narrator, the fascinating kaleidoscope of characters includes the founder of Perkins Institute, Samuel Gridley Howe, with whom she was in love; his wife, the glamorous Julia Ward Howe, a renowned writer, abolitionist, and suffragist; Laura's beloved teacher, who married a missionary and died insane from syphilis; an Irish orphan with whom Laura had a tumultuous affair; Annie Sullivan; and even the young Helen Keller.

Themes: Biographical fiction, disabilities, 21st Century women

Want to read ☐



Where the Crawdads Sing - Delia Owens

Historical Fiction

(370 pages) ([Large Print](#) and [e-Audiobook](#) available)



For years, rumours of the "Marsh Girl" haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet fishing village. Kya Clark is barefoot and wild; unfit for polite society. So in late 1969, when the popular Chase Andrews is found dead, locals immediately suspect her. But Kya is not what they say. A born naturalist with just one day of school, she takes life's lessons from the land, learning the real ways of the world from the dishonest signals of fireflies. But while she has the skills to live in solitude forever, the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. Drawn to two young men from town, who are each intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new and startling world—until the unthinkable happens.

In *Where the Crawdads Sing*, Owens juxtaposes an exquisite ode to the natural world against a profound coming of age story and haunting mystery. Thought-provoking, wise, and deeply moving, Owens's debut novel reminds us that we are forever shaped by the child within us, while also subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps.

Themes: Romance, relationships, mystery

[Want to read](#)



Bittersweet - Colleen McCullough

Romance

(512 pages) (e-Audiobook available)

Do bonds between sisters ever break? Edda, Grace, tufts and Kitty didn't think so. the four Latimer sisters, famous throughout New South Wales for their beauty, wit and ambition, have always been close; always happy. But then they left home to train as nurses, swapping the feather beds of their father's townhouse for the spartan bunks of hospital accommodation. And now, as the Depression casts its shadow across Australia, they are bound by their own secret desires as the world changes around them. Will they find the independence they crave? Or is life - like love - always bittersweet?

'McCullough's richly drawn characters grab hold of the heartstrings from the beginning of their journey through early 20th-century Australia, and prove that, even when choices are not in wide supply, happiness is attainable - even if, at times, it is bittersweet.' Publishers Weekly.

Themes: Romance, redemption, ambition, 1920's and 30's Australia

Want to read



Book Lovers - Emily Henry

Romance

(384 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Nora Stephens' life is books—she's read them all—and she is not that type of heroine. Not the plucky one, not the laidback dream girl, and especially not the sweetheart. In fact, the only people Nora is a heroine for are her clients, for whom she lands enormous deals as a cutthroat literary agent, and her beloved little sister Libby. Which is why she agrees to go to Sunshine Falls, North Carolina for the month of August when Libby begs her for a sisters' trip away—with visions of a small-town transformation for Nora, who she's convinced needs to become the heroine in her own story. But instead of picnics in meadows, or run-ins with a handsome country doctor or bulging-forearmed bartender, Nora keeps bumping into Charlie Lastra, a bookish brooding editor from back in the city. It would be a meet-cute if not for the fact that they've met many times and it's never been cute. If Nora knows she's not an ideal heroine, Charlie knows he's nobody's hero, but as they are thrown together again and again—in a series of coincidences no editor worth their salt would allow—what they discover might just unravel the carefully crafted stories they've written about themselves.

Themes: Relationship, romance, books about books

Want to read



The Champagne War - Fiona McIntosh

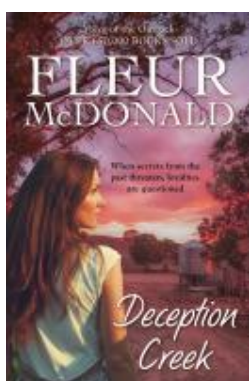
Historical fiction

(424 pages) (MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

In the summer of 1914, vigneron Jerome Mea heads off to war, certain he'll be home by Christmas. His new bride Sophie, a fifth generation and rebellious champenoise, is determined to ensure the forthcoming vintages will be testament to their love and the power of the people of pernay, especially its strong women. But as the years drag on, authorities advise that Jerome is missing, considered dead. When poison gas is first used in Belgium by the Germans, British chemist Charles Nash jumps to enlist. After he is injured, he is brought to Reims, where Sophie has helped to set up an underground hospital to care for the wounded. In the dark, ancient champagne cellars, their stirring emotions take them both by surprise. While Sophie battles to keep her vineyard going through the bombings, a critical sugar shortage forces her to strike a dangerous bargain with an untrustworthy acquaintance - but nothing will test her courage more than the news that filters through to her about the fate of her heroic Jerome

Themes: Love, war, France

Want to read



Deception Creek - Fleur McDonald

Romantic Suspense

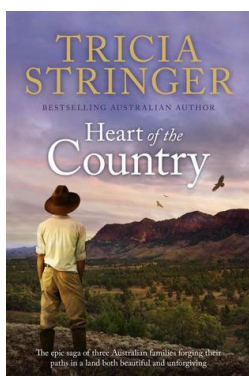
(376 pages) (e-Book available)

Emma Cameron, a recently divorced farmer and a local in Barker, runs Deception Creek, the farm that three generations of her family have owned before her. Every day Emma pushes herself hard on the land, hoping to make ten-year-old memories of a terrible car accident disappear. And now there are more recent nightmares of an ex-husband who refuses to understand how much the farm means to Emma.

When criminal Joel Hammond is released from jail and heads home to Barker, Detective Dave Burrows and his officer Senior Sergeant Jack Higgins are on high alert. Joel has a long and sorry history with many of the townsfolk and they are not keen to see him home to stay. Not all of the Barker locals want to see Joel run out of town though. Some even harbour doubts about Joel's conviction. The town finds itself split down the middle; families pitted against each other with devastating outcomes.

Themes: Romantic suspense, crime, Australian culture

Want to read



Heart of the Country - Tricia Stringer

Historical Romance

(512 pages) (e-Book available)

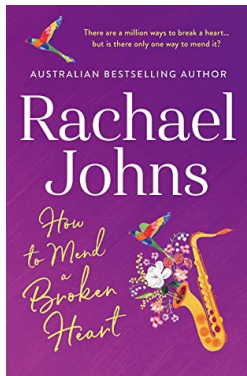
1846. Newly arrived from England, Thomas Baker is young, penniless and alone. Eager to make his mark on this strange new place called South Australia, he accepts work as an overseer on a distant sheep property, believing this will be the opportunity he seeks. But when Thomas's path crosses that of ex-convict, Septimus Wiltshire — a grasping con man hell bent on making a new life for himself and his family at any price — trouble is on the horizon.

But Thomas is made of stern stuff and his fortunes take a turn for the better when he meets spirited farmer's daughter Lizzie Smith, and soon he envisages their future together.

But this land is like no other he has encountered: both harsh and lovely, it breaks all but the strongest. When his nemesis intervenes once more and drought comes, Thomas finds himself tested almost beyond endurance with the risk of losing everything he and Lizzie have worked for... even their lives.

Themes: South Australia, country life, romance

Want to read



How to Mend a Broken Heart - Rachael Johns

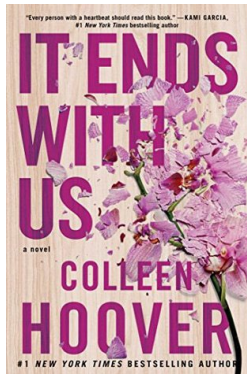
Romance

(448 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Felicity Bell has struggled to move on after her marriage broke down. Her ex has found love again, her children have their own lives, and it's beginning to feel like her only comfort comes from her dog and her job as a taxidermist. So, when Flick gets an offer to work in New Orleans for a few months, she's drawn to the chance to make a fresh start. Zoe is ready to start a family with her husband, but when he betrays her, she's left shattered and desperate for a change of scenery. Joining her mother on the other side of the world to drown her sorrows seems the perfect solution. Although both mother and daughter are wary of risking their hearts to love again, Theo, a jazz bar owner, and Jack, a local ghost hunter, offer fun, friendship and distraction. But all is not as it seems in New Orleans...A chance meeting with Aurelia, a reclusive artist who surprises them with lessons from her life, prompts Flick and Zoe to reassess what they want too. Can all three women learn from the past in order to embrace their future?

Themes: Mothers and daughters, loss, heartbreak

Want to read



It Ends With Us - Colleen Hoover

Romance

(376 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Sometimes it is the one who loves you who hurts you the most. Lily hasn't always had it easy, but that's never stopped her from working hard for the life she wants. She's come a long way from the small town in Maine where she grew up — she graduated from college, moved to Boston, and started her own business. So when she feels a spark with a gorgeous neurosurgeon named Ryle Kincaid, everything in Lily's life suddenly seems almost too good to be true. Ryle is assertive, stubborn, maybe even a little arrogant. He's also sensitive, brilliant, and has a total soft spot for Lily. And the way he looks in scrubs certainly doesn't hurt. Lily can't get him out of her head. But Ryle's complete aversion to relationships is disturbing. Even as Lily finds herself becoming the exception to his "no dating" rule, she can't help but wonder what made him that way in the first place. As questions about her new relationship overwhelm her, so do thoughts of Atlas Corrigan — her first love and a link to the past she left behind. He was her kindred spirit, her protector. When Atlas suddenly reappears, everything Lily has built with Ryle is threatened.

Themes: Contemporary, homelessness, domestic violence

Want to read



Lies and Weddings - Kevin Kwan

Romance

(437 pages)

Rufus Leung Gresham, future Earl of Greshambury and son of a former Hong Kong supermodel, has a problem: his family fortune, the legendary Gresham Trust, has been depleted by decades of profligate spending. While magazine covers and Instagram stories display impeccably designed manors and shiny new yachts, the secret reality holds nothing more than a gargantuan mountain of debt. The only solution, put forth by Rufus's scheming mother, is for Rufus to seduce a woman with money, thereby securing the family's precarious financial future. Should he marry Solène de Courcy, a French hotel heiress with honey-blond tresses and a royal bloodline? Should he pursue Martha Dung, the tattooed venture capital genius who passes out billions like lollipops? Or should he follow his heart, betray his family, squander his legacy, and finally confess his love to the literal girl next door, the humble daughter of a doctor, Eden Tong? When the Gresham family descends on the Big Island of Hawaii to host a veritable who's who of sultans, barons, and oligarchs for the wedding of the decade, Rufus must merely flex his famous abs to bewitch the heiress of his choice. But instead a hot mic exposes a secret tryst, a volcanic eruption burns through the nuptials, and the Gresham family's plans - and their reputation - go up in flames.

Themes: Family saga, Asian culture, matchmaking

Want to read



Little French Village of Booklover - Nina George

Romance

(263 pages) (e-Book available)

In a small town in balmy Provence, Marie-Jeanne has a gift. She can see the marks Love has left on the people around her. Glowing faces, hands that shimmer brighter when enclosed in another. Before long, Marie-Jeanne is playing matchmaker. When her foster father, Francis, sets up a mobile library travelling the many mountain towns of the Nyons region, Marie-Jeanne takes her quest further. Their library offers entertainment, guidance, reassurance and comfort - but for Marie-Jeanne, the books also allow her to bring soulmates together. The only person that Marie-Jeanne can't seem to find a partner for is herself. She has no glow of her own, though she waits and waits for it to appear. Everyone must have a soulmate, surely - but will Marie-Jeanne be able to recognise hers when Love finally comes her way?

Themes: Historical fiction, magic realism, books about books

Want to read



Love Match - Clare Fletcher

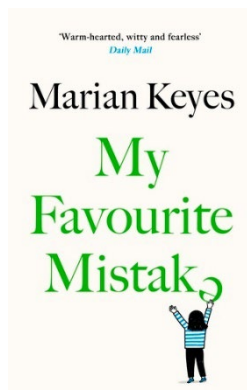
Romance

(408 pages) (e-Book available)

In a town like South Star, everyone knows Sarah Childs' name, face, entire history ... and the fact she's just been dumped by Johnno West. Sarah would happily keep to herself on their property, Dunromin, for the rest of her days. But now her parents are refusing to put her in charge until she spends a year getting more involved in the local community and, yes, dating. Well. She'll show them community spirit. She'll be Miss bloody South Star if that's what it takes. How hard can it be? Under small-town surveillance Sarah rekindles neglected friendships and throws herself in the dating deep end (recruiting the Bush Telegraph, Mabel Peters, to matchmake for her). She joins a new women's rugby team, the Pink Cockatoos, and even the bristly new cop in town, Sergeant Smith, can't slow Sarah's race to keep up appearances as the perfect daughter, citizen and girlfriend. As Sarah moves in with Mabel to help catalogue her vast wardrobe - bringing up memories of Mabel's beauty pageant past and long-lost friend Rose - vintage fashion might not be all that comes out of the closet. Wonderfully funny and very Australian, Love Match is a story about learning a new game, figuring out who you are, and maybe even finding real love.

Themes: Rugby, families, relationships

Want to read



My Favourite Mistake - Marian Keyes

Romance

(599 pages) (MP3 and e-Audiobook available)

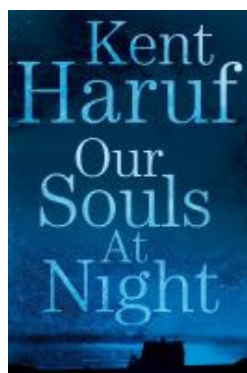
Anna has just lost her taste for the Big Apple... She has a life to envy. An apartment in New York. A well-meaning (too well-meaning?) partner. And a high-flying job in beauty PR. Who wouldn't want all that? Anna, it turns out.

Trading a minor midlife crisis for a major life event, she switches the skyscrapers of Manhattan for the tiny Irish town of Maumtully (population 1,217), helping old friends Brigit and Colm set up a luxury coastal retreat. Tougher than it sounds. Newflash: the locals hate the idea. So much so, there have been threats - and violence.

Anna, however, worked in the beauty industry. There's no ugliness she hasn't seen. No wrinkle she can't smooth over. There's just one fly in the ointment - old flame Joey Armstrong. He's going to be her wingman. Never mind their chequered history. Never mind what might have been. Because no matter how far you go, your mistakes will still be waiting for you...

Themes: Contemporary fiction, relationships, rom-com

Want to read



Our Souls at Night - Kent Haruf

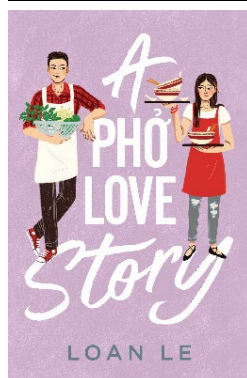
Romance

(408 pages) (Large Print and e-Audiobook available)

In the familiar setting of Holt, Colorado, home to all of Kent Haruf's inimitable fiction, Addie Moore pays an unexpected visit to a neighbour, Louis Waters. Her husband died years ago, as did his wife, and in such a small town they naturally have known of each other for decades; in fact, Addie was quite fond of Louis's wife. His daughter lives hours away in Colorado Springs, her son even farther away in Grand Junction, and Addie and Louis have long been living alone in houses now empty of family, the nights so terribly lonely, especially with no one to talk with. Their brave adventures-their pleasures and their difficulties-are hugely involving and truly resonant, making Our Souls at Night the perfect final instalment to this beloved writer's enduring contribution to American literature.

Themes: Loneliness, aging, contemporary fiction, relationships

Want to read



A Pho Love Story - Loan Le

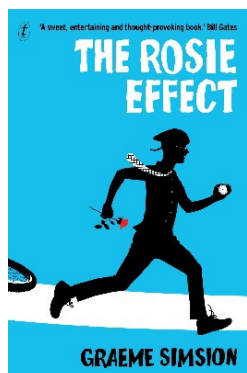
Contemporary Fiction

(402 pages)

If Bao Nguyen had to describe himself, he'd say he was a rock. Steady and strong, but not particularly interesting. His grades are average, his social status unremarkable. He works at his parents' pho restaurant, and even there, he is his parents' fifth favourite employee. Not ideal. If Linh Mai had to describe herself, she'd say she was a firecracker. Stable when unlit, but full of potential for joy and fire. She loves art and dreams pursuing a career in it. The only problem? Her parents rely on her in ways they're not willing to admit, including working practically full-time at her family's pho restaurant. For years, the Mais and the Nguyens have been at odds, having owned competing, neighbouring pho restaurants. Bao and Linh, who've avoided each other for most of their lives, both suspect that the feud stems from feelings much deeper than friendly competition. But then a chance encounter brings Linh and Bao in the same vicinity despite their best efforts and sparks fly, leading them both to wonder what took so long for them to connect. But then, of course, they immediately remember. Can Linh and Bao find love in the midst of feuding families and complicated histories?

Themes: Vietnamese-American culture, food, pho, romance, YA, self-identity

Want to read



The Rosie Effect - Graeme Simsion

Romance

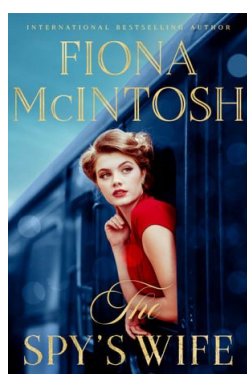
(368 pages) (MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

The Wife Project is complete, and Don and Rosie are happily married and living in New York. But they're about to face a new challenge because - surprise - Rosie is pregnant.

Don sets about learning the protocols of becoming a father, but his unusual research style gets him into trouble with the law. Fortunately his best friend Gene is on hand to offer advice: he's left Claudia and moved in with Don and Rosie. As Don tries to schedule time for pregnancy research, getting Gene and Claudia to reconcile, servicing the industrial refrigeration unit that occupies half his apartment, helping Dave the Baseball Fan save his business, and staying on the right side of Lydia the social worker, he almost misses the biggest problem of all: he might lose Rosie when she needs him the most.

Themes: Romance, parenthood, fatherhood, comedy

Want to read



The Spy's Wife - Fiona McIntosh

Historical Fiction

(432 pages) (e-Book available)

Evie, a widow and stationmaster's daughter, can't help but look out for the weekly visit of the handsome man she and her sister call the Southerner on their train platform in the wilds of northern England. When polite salutations shift to friendly conversations, they become captivated by each other. After so much sorrow, the childless Evie can't believe love and the chance for her own family have come into her life again. With rumours coming out of Germany that Hitler may be stirring up war, local English authorities have warned against spies. Even Evie becomes suspicious of her new suitor, Roger. But all is not what it seems. When Roger is arrested, Evie comes up with an audacious plan to prove his innocence that means moving to Germany and working as a British counter-spy. Wearing the disguise of dutiful, naïve wife, Evie must charm the Nazi Party's dangerous officials to bring home hard evidence of war mongering on the Führer's part. But in this game of cat and mouse, it seems everyone has an ulterior motive, and Evie finds it impossible to know who to trust. With lives on the line, ultimate sacrifices will be made as she wrestles between her patriotism and saving the man she loves.

Themes: World War II, espionage, romance

Want to read



The Sugar Palace - Fiona McIntosh

Historical Fiction

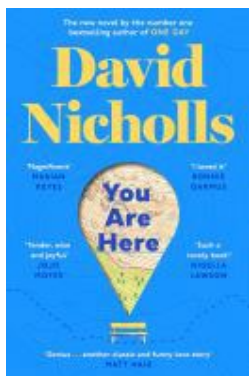
(384 pages) [\(e-Book and e-Audiobook available\)](#)



'How about we call it the Sugar Palace? And when people enter, we'll make sure it feels like a colourful fairytale spun from sugar.' Under the clamour of the Sydney Harbour Bridge being built nearby, Grace Fairweather is working in her father's grocery shop in The Rocks when she begins making her own confectionery. Her colourful creations of toffees, lollies and chocolates soon become crowd favourites, and Grace begins to dream of one day opening her own sweetshop. When the roguish but irresistible Londoner Alfie Sweeting comes to work for the Fairweathers, his ambition for her success thrills her – so much so that she begins to question her engagement to Norman. Perhaps the 'safe' option in life isn't the right thing for her after all. Alfie encourages her to open not just a sweetshop, but a delightful destination for young and old – a sugar palace! With Grace's natural business acumen and Alfie's creative sales skills, it seems like they could be the perfect pairing – in work and in love – but when Alfie's criminal past catches up with him, both their lives come under threat and Grace is forced to make the most difficult decision of all. Moving between the colourful world of a carnival-like confectionery store and Sydney's organised crime world of brothel madams, gambling dens and cocaine dealers, this is a thrilling romantic adventure that shows not everyone is to be trusted, and life isn't always as sweet as it seems.

Themes: Australian, drama, confectionery, romance

[Want to read](#)



You Are Here - David Nicholls

Contemporary Fiction

(349 pages)

Sometimes you need to get lost to find your way... Michael is coming undone. Adrift after his wife's departure, he has begun taking himself on long, solitary walks across the English countryside. Becoming ever more reclusive, he'll do anything to avoid his empty house.

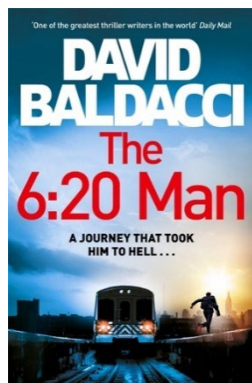
Marnie, on the other hand, is stuck. Hiding alone in her London flat, she avoids old friends and any reminders of her rotten, selfish ex-husband. Curled up with a good book, she's battling the long afternoons of a life that feels like it's passing her by.

When a persistent mutual friend and some very unpredictable weather conspire to toss Michael and Marnie together on the most epic of ten-day hikes, neither of them can think of anything worse. Until, of course, they discover exactly what they've been looking for.

Michael and Marnie are on the precipice of a bright future . . . if they can survive the journey.

Themes: Romance, hiking, humour, travel

[Want to read](#)



The 6:20 Man - David Baldacci

Thriller

(432 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



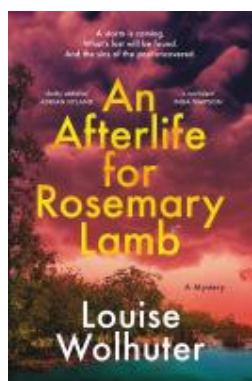
Having survived combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq and been decorated with medals, Travis Devine mysteriously leaves the Army under a cloud of suspicion. And at thirty-two years old, he's swapping fighting the Taliban and Al Qaeda for a different kind of danger in the cut-throat world of high finance.

His daily commute on the 6.20 a.m. train into New York's financial district, to his new job as an analyst at the minted powerhouse investment bank Cowl and Comely, takes him into a world where greed, power, jealousy and ambition result in the financial abuse of the masses and the enrichment of an elite few. But it is on this daily journey that he passes a house where he sees something that sounds alarm signals he cannot ignore.

A close friend of Devine's, Sarah Ewes, is the first victim and the mysterious circumstances surrounding her death at Cowl and Comely compel him to investigate further. As he digs deeper, he discovers strange coincidences and unnerving truths. As the deaths pile up, and the major players show their hands, he must question who he can trust and who he must fight.

Themes: Money laundering, contemporary, New York, espionage

Want to read



An Afterlife for Rosemary Lamb - Louise Wolhuter

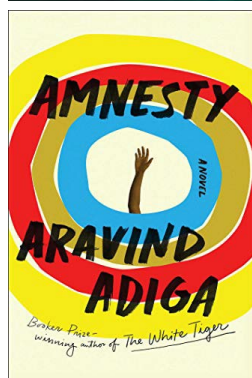
Mystery

(295 pages)

Jessie Else disappeared the summer the Lambs came to Magpie Beach. Not that the two events were connected at all, in reality; only in my own head, in my own world. They marked for me the end of a certain quiet time and the start of a more complicated living. Winifred is a small town full of prejudices and assumptions. Meg and Lily are outsiders who live on its margins at Magpie Beach, where they've managed to keep out of each other's - and everyone else's - way for years. That is, until Rosemary comes along and draws them into an unlikely friendship. When nine-year-old Jessie Else goes missing, the residents of Winifred begin locking their doors, and fingers soon start pointing towards Magpie Beach. Questions threaten to undo Meg, Rosemary and Lily's quiet existence, and the women band together to protect themselves, and to protect each other, but all three are holding secrets that are too big for them to keep on their own. It's only a matter of time before they start to unravel-and nothing will ever be the same again.

Themes: Queensland, missing persons, friendship, small towns

Want to read



Amnesty - Aravind Adiga

Mystery

(268 pages) (Large Print and e-Book available)

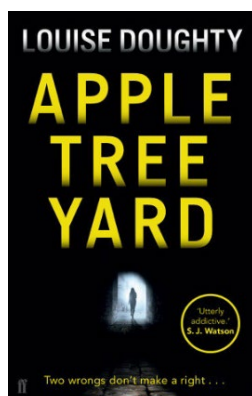


Danny—formerly Dhananjaya Rajaratnam—is an illegal immigrant in Sydney, Australia, denied refugee status after he fled from Sri Lanka. Working as a cleaner, living out of a grocery storeroom, for three years he's been trying to create a new identity for himself. And now, with his beloved vegan girlfriend, Sonja, with his hidden accent and highlights in his hair, he is as close as he has ever come to living a normal life.

But then one morning, Danny learns a female client of his has been murdered. The deed was done with a knife, at a creek he'd been to with her before; and a jacket was left at the scene, which he believes belongs to another of his clients—a doctor with whom Danny knows the woman was having an affair. Suddenly Danny is confronted with a choice: Come forward with his knowledge about the crime and risk being deported? Or say nothing, and let justice go undone? Over the course of this day, evaluating the weight of his past, his dreams for the future, and the unpredictable, often absurd reality of living invisibly and undocumented, he must wrestle with his conscience and decide if a person without rights still has responsibilities.

Themes: Illegal immigration, justice, suspense

Want to read



Apple Tree Yard - Louise Doughty

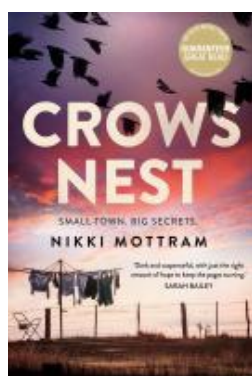
Crime/thriller

(417 pages) (DVD available)

Yvonne Carmichael sits in the witness box. The charge is murder. Before all of this, she was happily married, a successful scientist, a mother of two. Now she's a suspect, squirming under fluorescent lights and the penetrating gaze of the alleged accomplice who's sitting across from her, watching: a man who's also her lover. As Yvonne faces hostile questioning, she must piece together the story of her affair with this unnamed figure who has charmed and haunted her. This is a tale of sexual intrigue, ruthless urges, and danger, which has blindsided her from a seemingly innocuous angle. Here in the courtroom, everything hinges on one night in a dark alley called *Apple Tree Yard*.

Themes: Crime, relationships, mystery/thriller

Want to read



Crows Nest - Nikki Mottram

Crime

(302 pages) (eBook and e-Audiobook available)

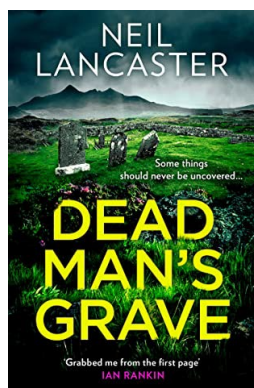


Fleeing problems in her own marriage, child protection worker Dana Gibson leaves Sydney for a job in the Queensland town of Toowoomba. Her first house call is to nearby Crows Nest to assess the children of Sandra Kirby, which results in her getting both her new boss and a local detective offside. Dana soon learns that, in the country, city rules do not apply.

When Sandra Kirby and her best friend are found shot dead, Dana is drawn into an investigation that will force her to strip away the friendly veneer of small-town life, while grappling with ghosts of her own. As buried secrets, bitter tensions and corruption come to light, how far will locals go to stop her uncovering the truth of what happened?

Themes: Murder, child welfare, Queensland, country towns, relationships

Want to read



Dead Man's Grave - Neil Lancaster

Crime/Mystery

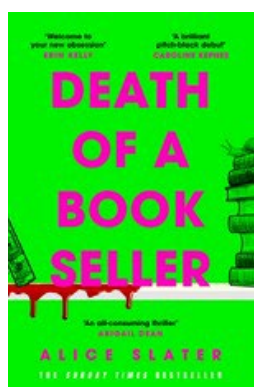
(400 pages) (e-Book available)

This grave can never be opened. The head of Scotland's most powerful crime family is brutally murdered, his body dumped inside an ancient grave in a remote cemetery. This murder can never be forgotten. Detectives Max Craigie and Janie Calder arrive at the scene, a small town where everyone has secrets to hide. They soon realise this murder is part of a blood feud between two Scottish families that stretches back to the 1800s. One thing's for certain: it might be the latest killing, but it won't be the last...

This killer can never be caught. As the body count rises, the investigation uncovers large-scale corruption at the heart of the Scottish Police Service. Now Max and Janie must turn against their closest colleagues – to solve a case that could cost them far more than just their lives...

Themes: Mystery Thriller, British detective, Scotland

Want to read



Death of a Bookseller - Alice Slater

Thriller

(374 pages)

A BOOKSHOP. A TRUE CRIME CASE. A DEADLY FRIENDSHIP.

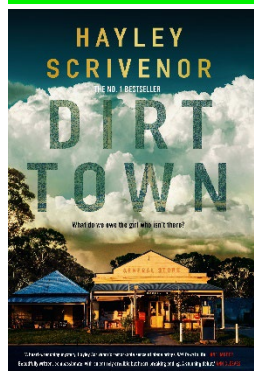
Roach - bookseller, loner and true crime obsessive - is not interested in making friends. She has all the company she needs in her serial killer books, murder podcasts and her pet snail, Bleep. That is, until Laura joins the bookshop.

Smelling of roses, with her cute literary tote bags and beautiful poetry, she's everyone's new favourite bookseller. But beneath the shiny veneer, Roach senses a darkness within Laura, the same darkness Roach possesses.

As Roach's curiosity blooms into morbid obsession, it becomes clear that she is prepared to infiltrate Laura's life at any cost

Themes: Stalking, crime, deception, contemporary fiction

Want to read



Dirt Town - Hayley Scrivenor

Crime/Mystery

(359 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

My best friend wore her name, Esther, like a queen wearing her crown at a jaunty angle. We were twelve years old when she went missing. On a sweltering Friday afternoon in Durton, best friends Ronnie and Esther leave school together. Esther never makes it home. Ronnie's going to find her, she has a plan. Lewis will help. Their friend can't be gone, Ronnie won't believe it.

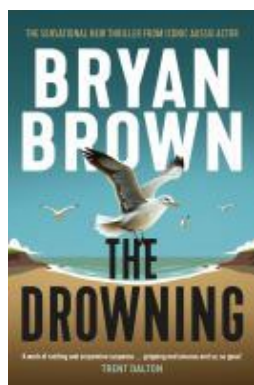
Detective Sergeant Sarah Michaels can believe it. She has seen what people are capable of. She knows more than anyone how, in a moment of weakness, a person can be driven to do something they never thought possible.

Lewis can believe it too. But he can't reveal what he saw that afternoon at the creek without exposing his own secret.

Five days later, Esther's buried body is discovered. *What do we owe the girl who isn't there?*

Themes: Murder, missing children, friends, secrecy

Want to read



The Drowning - Bryan Brown

Crime/Mystery/Thriller

(274 pages) (Large Print and e-Book available)

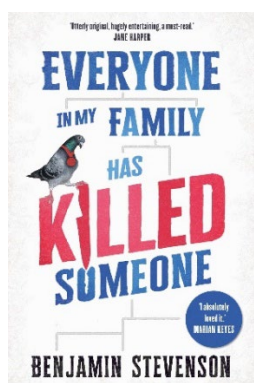
The body of a local teenage boy is found on the beach of a sleepy northern New South Wales town. David went for an evening swim and got into trouble... at least, that's what it looks like.

Three weeks before, Leila, a young backpacker, didn't turn up for her shift at the local cafe. Benny, the owner, isn't worried. It happens - backpackers are always on the move. There'll be another one.

One of the locals, Adrian, has been a help to Benny. He's found him a nice little sideline. Not exactly legal. Is that all Adrian is arranging on the coast? He once was a cop but has he gone bad? And in the back-blocks outside town, a bikie gang is gearing up for a large consignment from South America. Murder, drugs, liaisons and lies are stirring up this small coastal town.

Themes: Murder, kidnapping, Australian

Want to read



Everyone in my Family has Killed Someone - Benjamin Stevenson

Cosy Crime Fiction

(384 pages) (e-Book available)

Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle meet Knives Out and The Thursday Murder Club in this fiendishly clever blend of classic and modern murder mystery.

I was dreading the Cunningham family reunion even before the first murder.

Before the storm stranded us at the mountain resort, snow and bodies piling up.

The thing is, us Cunningham's don't really get along. We've only got one thing in common- we've all killed someone...

Themes: Crime, mystery, family

Want to read



Everyone on this Train is a Suspect - Benjamin Stevenson

Cosy Crime Fiction

(318 pages) [\(Large Print, e-Book, e-Audiobook available\)](#)

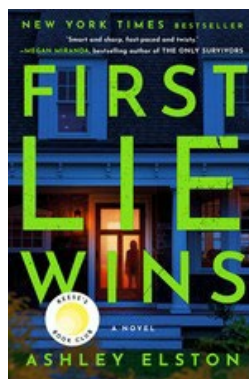
When the Australian Mystery Writers' Society invited me to their crime-writing festival aboard the Ghan, the famous train between Darwin and Adelaide, I was hoping for some inspiration for my second book. Fiction, this time- I needed a break from real people killing each other. Obviously, that didn't pan out.

The program is a who's who of crime-writing royalty- *the debut writer (me!), the forensic science writer, the blockbuster writer, the legal thriller writer, the literary writer, the psychological suspense writer.*

But when one of us is murdered, six authors quickly turn into five detectives. Together, we should know how to solve a crime. Or commit one. How can you find a killer when all the suspects know how to get away with murder?

Themes: Crime, mystery, family

[Want to read](#)



First Lie Wins - Ashley Elston

Thriller

(376 pages)

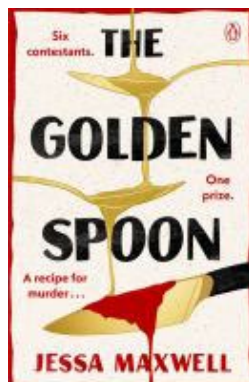
The identity comes first: Evie Porter. Once she's given a name and location by her mysterious boss, Mr. Smith, she learns everything there is to know about the town and the people in it. Then the mark: Ryan Sumner. The last piece of the puzzle is the job.

Evie isn't privy to Mr. Smith's real identity, but she knows this job isn't like the others. Ryan has gotten under her skin, and she's starting to envision a different sort of life for herself. But Evie can't make any mistakes--especially after what happened last time.

Evie Porter must stay one step ahead of her past while making sure there's still a future in front of her. The stakes couldn't be higher--but then, Evie has always liked a challenge...

Themes: Crime, swindlers, strong female characters

[Want to read](#)



The Golden Spoon - Jessa Maxwell

Cosy Crime

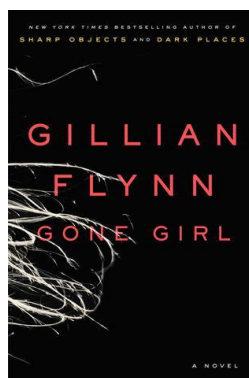
373 pages) [\(e-Book available\)](#)

For six amateur bakers, competing in *Bake Week* is a dream come true. When they arrive at Grafton Manor to compete, they're ready to do whatever it takes to win the ultimate prize- The Golden Spoon.

But for the show's famous host, Betsy Martin, *Bake Week* is more than just a competition. Grafton Manor is her family's home and legacy - and *Bake Week* is her life's work. It's imperative that both continue to succeed. But as the competition commences, things begin to go awry. At first, it's small acts of sabotage. But when a body is discovered, it's clear that for someone in the competition, The Golden Spoon is a prize worth killing for...

Themes: Suspense, baking, relationships, reality tv

[Want to read](#)



Gone Girl - Gillian Flynn

Thriller

(415 pages) [\(DVD available\)](#)

On a warm summer morning in North Carthage, Missouri, it is Nick and Amy Dunne's fifth wedding anniversary. Presents are being wrapped and reservations are being made when Nick's clever and beautiful wife disappears from their rented McMansion on the Mississippi River. Husband-of-the-Year Nick isn't doing himself any favors with cringe-worthy daydreams about the slope and shape of his wife's head, but passages from Amy's diary reveal the alpha-girl perfectionist could have put anyone dangerously on edge. Under mounting pressure from the police and the media—as well as Amy's fiercely doting parents—the town golden boy parades an endless series of lies, deceptions, and inappropriate behaviour. Nick is oddly evasive, and he's definitely bitter—but is he really a killer? As the cops close in, every couple in town is soon wondering how well they know the one that they love. With his twin sister, Margo, at his side, Nick stands by his innocence. Trouble is, if Nick didn't do it, where is that beautiful wife? And what was in that silvery gift box hidden in the back of her bedroom closet?

Themes: Relationships, crime, mystery

[Want to read](#)



The Guest List - Lucy Foley

Mystery/Thriller

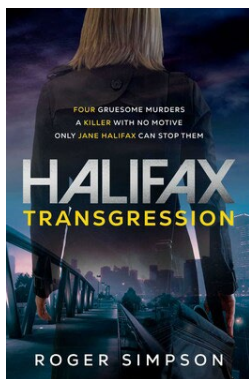
(330 pages) [\(e-Book available\)](#)

On an island off the coast of Ireland, guests gather to celebrate two people joining their lives together as one. The groom: handsome and charming, a rising television star. The bride: smart and ambitious, a magazine publisher. It's a wedding for a magazine, or for a celebrity: the designer dress, the remote location, the luxe party favors, the boutique whiskey. The cell phone service may be spotty and the waves may be rough, but every detail has been expertly planned and will be expertly executed.

But perfection is for plans, and people are all too human. As the champagne is popped and the festivities begin, resentments and petty jealousies begin to mingle with the reminiscences and well wishes. The groomsmen begin the drinking game from their school days. The bridesmaid not-so-accidentally ruins her dress. The bride's oldest (male) friend gives an uncomfortably caring toast. And then someone turns up dead. Who didn't wish the happy couple well? And perhaps more important, why?

Themes: Murder, Ireland, suspense thriller, contemporary

[Want to read](#)



Halifax: Transgression - Roger Simpson

Crime/Thriller

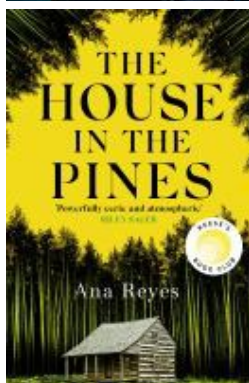
(400 pages) (e-Book available)

The first murder is brazen, violent and ritualistic. Committed in the victim's home, the killer leaves few clues as to their motive or their identity. All the police know is that the perpetrator entered the house, impaled the art collector on one of his own priceless sculptures, before melting away into the night.

Inspector Eric Ringer is desperate for Dr Jane Halifax to profile the killer, but Jane is cautious. She and Eric have a past ... plus, she hates these kinds of cases; a psychopath is a psychopath, any way you slice it. But there's something about this killer that intrigues Jane. And as the bodies pile up, Jane must use all her knowledge and intuition to enter the mind of the murderer before they strike again.

Themes: Contemporary, thriller, crime, forensic psychologist

Want to read ☐



House in the Pines - Ana Reyes

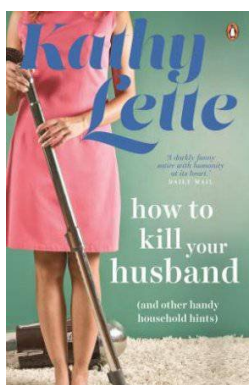
Crime

(321 pages)

This is the story of a house. The cabin lies deep in the woods, where the trees are so dense it's easy to miss. On the outside it might look like it's crumbling, crawling with weeds, but on the inside it's warm and cosy. A fire crackles in the fireplace. Dinner simmers on the stove. Maya once saw this cabin as an idyllic place, like a cottage from a fairy tale, but now she knows the danger that lurks beneath. The summer she visited the cabin was the summer her best friend Aubrey died. Now, another woman from Maya's hometown has died in the same strange, unexplained way, and Maya believes only she can save the next innocent girl. Guided by her fractured memory and a mysterious, unfinished book by her late father, Maya returns home to face the house in the pines and the man who waits there - the man she's tried so hard to forget...

Themes: Cold case, murder, friendship, Massachusetts, trauma

Want to read ☐



How to Kill your Husband - Kathy Lette

Mystery

(372 pages) (Large Print available)

All women want to kill their husbands some of the time Where there's a will, I intend to be in it, wives half-joke to each other. Marriage, it would appear, is a fun-packed frivolous hobby, only occasionally resulting in death. But when Jazz Jardine is arrested for her husband's murder, the joke falls flat. Life should begin at 40 - not with life imprisonment for killing your spouse. Jazz, stay-at-home mum and domestic goddess; Hannah, childless career woman; and Cassie, demented working mother of two are three ordinary women. Their record collections are classical, not criminal. Cassie and Hannah set out immediately to prove their best friend's innocence, uncovering betrayal, adultery, plot twists, thinner thighs and toy boys aplenty en route but will their friendship survive these ever darker revelations?

Themes: Humour, marriage, murder, contemporary, friendship, mystery

Want to read ☐



I Came to Say Goodbye - Caroline Overington

Mystery/Thriller

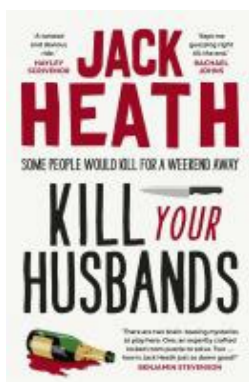
(295 pages)

Todd Hewitt is the only boy in a town of men. Ever since the settlers were infected with the Noise germ, Todd can hear everything the men think, and they hear everything he thinks. Todd is just a month away from becoming a man, but in the midst of the cacophony, he knows that the town is hiding something from him -- something so awful Todd is forced to flee with only his dog, whose simple, loyal voice he hears too.

With hostile men from the town in pursuit, the two stumble upon a strange and eerily silent creature: a girl. Who is she? Why wasn't she killed by the germ like all the females on New World? Propelled by Todd's gritty narration, readers are in for a white-knuckle journey in which a boy on the cusp of manhood must unlearn everything he knows in order to figure out who he truly is.

Themes: Australia, drama, contemporary, mystery

Want to read ☐



Kill Your Husbands - Jack Heath

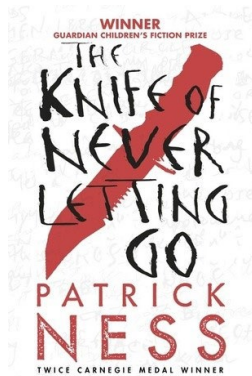
Thriller

(384 pages) (e-Book available)

Three couples, friends since the university athletics team, travel to a house in the mountains for an unplugged weekend of drinking and bushwalking. No internet, no phones, no stress. On the first night, the topic of partner-swapping comes up. It's a joke - at first. Not everyone is keen, but an agreement is made. The lights will be turned out. The three men will go into the three bedrooms. The three women will each pick a bedroom at random. It won't be awkward later, because no one will know for sure who they've slept with - though each guest is privately sure that they alone will be able to tell. But when the lights come back on, someone is missing. A search of the house and the surrounding bushland turns up a body. Five people remain. They have no way of contacting the police. Nor can they leave - the key to the car is missing. And the killer is just getting started. Two weeks later, Senior Constable Kiara Lui drives to the house with her girlfriend, Elise. She's already interviewed the survivors. Now, she must work out which of them is lying, and why...

Themes: Psychological thriller, mystery, Australian, contemporary

Want to read ☐



The Knife of Never Letting Go - Patrick Ness

Young Adult

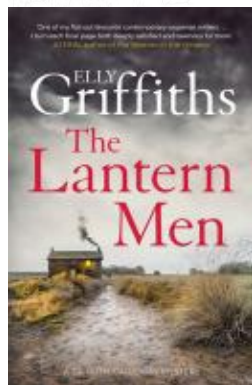
(496 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Todd Hewitt is the only boy in a town of men. Ever since the settlers were infected with the Noise germ, Todd can hear everything the men think, and they hear everything he thinks. Todd is just a month away from becoming a man, but in the midst of the cacophony, he knows that the town is hiding something from him -- something so awful Todd is forced to flee with only his dog, whose simple, loyal voice he hears too.

With hostile men from the town in pursuit, the two stumble upon a strange and eerily silent creature: a girl. Who is she? Why wasn't she killed by the germ like all the females on New World? Propelled by Todd's gritty narration, readers are in for a white-knuckle journey in which a boy on the cusp of manhood must unlearn everything he knows in order to figure out who he truly is.

Themes: Dystopia, thriller, identity

Want to read



The Lantern Men - Elly Griffiths

Crime

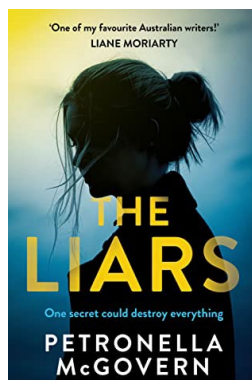
(363 pages) (e-Book available)

Everything has changed for Dr. Ruth Galloway. She has a new job, home and partner, and is no longer North Norfolk police's resident forensic archaeologist. That is, until convicted murderer Amyas March offers to make DCI Nelson a deal. Nelson was always sure that March killed more women than he was charged with. Now March confirms this, and offers to show Nelson where the other bodies are buried - but only if Ruth will do the digging.

Curious, but wary, Ruth agrees. March tells Ruth that he killed four more women and that their bodies are buried near a village bordering the fens, said to be haunted by the Lantern Men, mysterious figures holding lights that lure travellers to their deaths. Is Amyas March himself a lantern man, luring Ruth back to Norfolk? What is his plan, and why is she so crucial to it? And are the killings really over?

Themes: Forensic anthropology, British crime, serial killer, Norfolk

Want to read



The Liars - Petronella McGovern

Crime/Thriller

(412 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

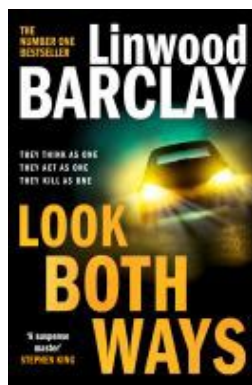
What if your search for the truth puts your family at risk?

The close-knit community of Kinton Bay is shocked when fifteen-year-old Siena Britton makes a grisly discovery in the national park. She believes it's a skull from the town's violent colonial past and posts a video which hits the news headlines. Her parents, Meri and Rollo, aren't so sure. In 1998, their classmate went missing after a party in the Killing Cave. They're horrified to discover the destructive teenage parties are still happening, and Siena was there last weekend.

While Meri is trying to keep her daughter out of trouble, she doesn't realise her son, Taj, has his own problems. And none of them foresees the danger that Siena's actions will create for the whole family. As more secrets are exposed, the police investigate whether multiple murders have been committed. If so, by whom? And is the killer still living in Kinton Bay?

Themes: Australian, murder, secrets, family, suspense

Want to read



Look Both Ways - Linwood Barclay

Thriller

(367 pages) (MP3, eBook and e-Audiobook available)

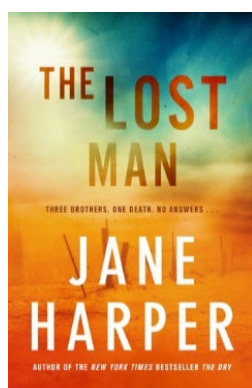
The residents of Garrett Island are part of a ground-breaking experiment. For a month, their cars will be replaced by self-driving vehicles - voice-controlled, comfortable and safe.

Single mum Sandra is prepping for the huge media event, and she's ready for a driverless future. Widowed after her husband fell asleep at the wheel, she's relieved that her kids may never need to drive themselves.

But as the day gets underway, disaster strikes. A journalist vanishes, possibly murdered. And before long, it's clear something is very wrong. The cars are no longer taking orders from their passengers. They're starting to organise. They're starting to hunt. And they've got the residents of Garret Island in their sights.

Themes: Automated vehicles, sabotage, single mothers, thriller

Want to read



The Lost Man - Jane Harper

Mystery

(340 pages) (Large Print, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Two brothers meet at the border of their vast cattle properties under the unrelenting sun of outback Queensland. They are at the stockman's grave, a landmark so old, no one can remember who is buried there. But today, the scant shadow it casts was the last hope for their middle brother, Cameron. The Bright family's quiet existence is thrown into grief and anguish. Something had been troubling Cameron. Did he lose hope and walk to his death? Because if he didn't, the isolation of the outback leaves few suspects...

Themes: Australian country life, families, domestic abuse, suspense

Want to read



The Maid - Nita Prose

Crime Fiction

(304 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Since Gran died a few months ago, twenty-five-year-old Molly has been navigating life's complexities all by herself. No matter—she throws herself with gusto into her work as a hotel maid. Her unique character, along with her obsessive love of cleaning and proper etiquette, make her an ideal fit for the job. She delights in donning her crisp uniform each morning, stocking her cart with miniature soaps and bottles, and returning guest rooms at the Regency Grand Hotel to a state of perfection. But Molly's orderly life is upended the day she enters the suite of the infamous and wealthy Charles Black, only to find it in a state of disarray and Mr. Black himself dead in his bed. Before she knows what's happening, Molly's unusual demeanour has the police targeting her as their lead suspect. She quickly finds herself caught in a web of deception, one she has no idea how to untangle. Fortunately for Molly, friends she never knew she had unite with her in a search for clues to what really happened to Mr. Black—but will they be able to find the real killer before it's too late?

Themes: Mystery, crime, police procedural, neurodivergence

Want to read



The Mother - Jane Caro

Thriller

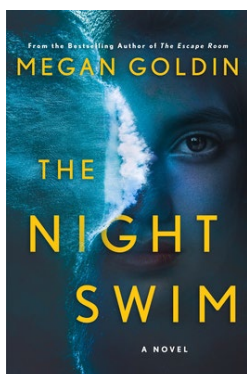
(208 pages) (MP3, DVD, e-Audiobook available)

Recently widowed, Miriam Duffy is a respectable North Shore real estate agent and devoted mother and grandmother. She was thrilled when her younger daughter Ally married her true love, but as time goes by Miriam wonders whether all is well with Ally, as she moves to the country and gradually withdraws, finding excuses every time Miriam offers to visit. Their relationship has always had its ups and downs, and Miriam tries to give her daughter the distance she so clearly wants. But is all as it seems?

When the truth of her daughter's situation is revealed, Miriam watches in disbelief as Ally and her children find themselves increasingly vulnerable and cut off from the world. As the situation escalates and the law proves incapable of protecting them, Miriam is faced with an unthinkable decision. But she will do anything for the people she loves most in the world. Wouldn't you?

Themes: Australian fiction, domestic abuse, coercive control

Want to read



The Night Swim - Megan Goldin

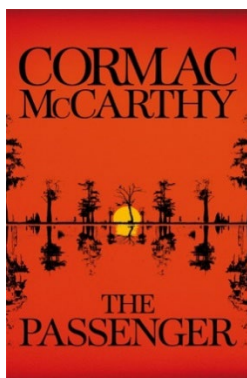
Psychological Thriller

(340 pages) (Large Print, MP3, e-Audiobook available)

After the first season of her true crime podcast became an overnight sensation and set an innocent man free, Rachel Krall is now a household name—and the last hope for thousands of people seeking justice. But she's used to being recognized for her voice, not her face. Which makes it all the more unsettling when she finds a note on her car windshield, addressed to her, begging for help. The small town of Neapolis is being torn apart by a devastating rape trial. The town's golden boy, a swimmer destined for Olympic greatness, has been accused of raping a high school student, the beloved granddaughter of the police chief. Under pressure to make Season Three a success, Rachel throws herself into interviewing and investigating—but the mysterious letters keep showing up in unexpected places. Someone is following her, and she won't stop until Rachel finds out what happened to her sister twenty-five years ago. Officially, Jenny Stills tragically drowned, but the letters insist she was murdered—and when Rachel starts asking questions, nobody seems to want to answer. The past and present start to collide as Rachel uncovers startling connections between the two cases that will change the course of the trial and the lives of everyone involved.

Themes: Contemporary, rape trials, North Carolina, podcasts

Want to read



The Passenger - Cormac McCarthy

Thriller

(400 pages) (e-Book available)

1980, PASS CHRISTIAN, MISSISSIPPI: It is three in the morning when Bobby Western zips the jacket of his wetsuit and plunges from the boat deck into darkness. His divelight illuminates the sunken jet, nine bodies still buckled in their seats, hair floating, eyes devoid of speculation. Missing from the crash site are the pilot's flightbag, the plane's black box, and the tenth passenger. But how? A collateral witness to machinations that can only bring him harm, Western is shadowed in body and spirit – by men with badges; by the ghost of his father, inventor of the bomb that melted glass and flesh in Hiroshima; and by his sister, the love and ruin of his soul.

Traversing the American South, from the garrulous bar rooms of New Orleans to an abandoned oil rig off the Florida coast, *The Passenger* is a breathtaking novel of morality and science, the legacy of sin, and the madness that is human consciousness.

Themes: Mystery, suspense, air crashes, grief

Want to read



Pheasants Nest - Louise Milligan

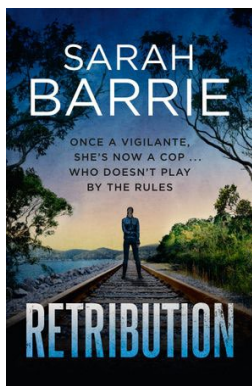
Thriller

(312 pages) (e-Book available)

Kate Delaney has made the biggest mistake of her life. She picked the wrong guy to humiliate on a girls' night out and now she is living every woman's worst nightmare. Kate finds herself brutalised, bound and gagged in the back of a car being driven god knows where by a man whose name she doesn't know, and she is petrified about what's in store for her. As a journalist who is haunted by the crimes she's had to report over her career, Kate is terrifyingly familiar with the statistics about women who go missing—and the fear and trauma behind the headlines. She knows only too well how those stories usually end. Kate can only hope the police will find her before it's too late, but she's aware a random crime is hardest to solve. As the clock ticks down, she tries to keep herself sane by thinking about her beloved boyfriend and friends, escaping into memories of love and happy times together. She knows she cannot give way to despair.

Themes: Crime, suspense, Australian journalist

Want to read



Retribution - Sarah Barrie

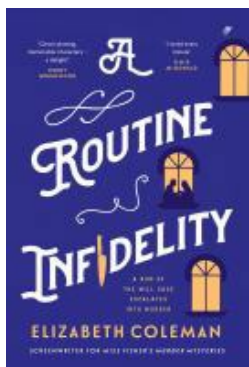
Thriller

(384 pages) (e-Book available)

Ace hacker, ex-prostitute, Jack Daniels drinker and part-time vigilante Lexi Winter is now working with the police, with a new enemy in her sights and an old foe on her mind. Most probationary constables would balk at chasing a drug dealer into a train tunnel in the dead of night - not Lexi. But when she emerges, injured but alive, to face the wrath of her boss it's clear that while Lexi may now be in uniform, she has as much trouble with authority as ever. Just to prove it, Lexi is quietly using her hacking skills to investigate a notorious drug-dealing Sydney crime family with links to her old prey, the paedophile Damon Vaughn. As her colleague Detective Sergeant Finn Carson investigates a death on a Sydney building site that leads him to the picturesque Wondabyne train station on the Hawkesbury River, Inspector Rachael Langley oversees an enquiry that is becoming ever more complex as multiple lines of investigation seem to interweave. What they don't know is that Lexi is the only one who can unravel them - if only she'll toe the line.

Themes: Vigilante, murder mystery, Australian

Want to read



A Routine Infidelity - Elizabeth Coleman

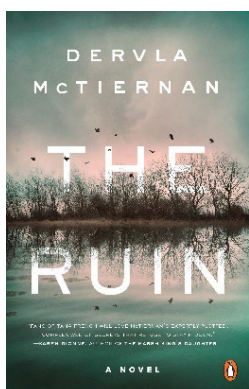
Cosy Crime Fiction

(381 pages) (eBook available)

Thirty-five-year-old commitment-phobe Edwina (Ted) Bristol runs EBI, a private investigation agency. Her latest case is to conduct routine surveillance on a couple suspected of having an illicit affair. She also discovers her sister Bob has fallen prey to an internet catfishing scam. With some help from her acutely-intelligent miniature schnauzer, Miss Marple, who's a valued colleague as well as a beloved pet, they set out to find the scammer, who has already fleeced Bob of \$500. Meanwhile, Ted's next door neighbour, a medium named Chantal, insists she's been getting messages from the spirit world warning her that Ted is in danger. Ted's a rabid non-believer; and she's incensed! As Bob's catfishing case takes a series of bizarre twists and turns and the danger from the embezzlement case escalates to murder, Ted may be getting her first taste of serious crime...

Themes: Women private investigators, catfishing, adultery, murder, Melbourne

Want to read



The Ruin - Dervla McTiernan

Crime Fiction

(380 pages) (Large Print, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

It's been twenty years since Cormac Reilly discovered the body of Hilaria Blake in her crumbling Georgian home. But he's never forgotten the two children she left behind...

When Aisling Conroy's boyfriend Jack is found in the freezing black waters of the river Corrib, the police tell her it was suicide. A surgical resident, she throws herself into study and work, trying to forget - until Jack's sister Maude shows up. Maude suspects foul play, and she is determined to prove it.

DI Cormac Reilly is the detective assigned with the re-investigation of an 'accidental' overdose twenty years ago - of Jack and Maude's drug- and alcohol-addled mother. Cormac is under increasing pressure to charge Maude for murder when his colleague Danny uncovers a piece of evidence that will change everything...

Themes: Mystery, Ireland, cold case, family secrets

Want to read



Run, Rose, Run - Dolly Parton, James Patterson

Thriller Fiction

(439 pages) (e-Book available)

From America's most beloved superstar and its greatest storyteller—a thriller about a young singer/songwriter on the rise and on the run, and determined to do whatever it takes to survive.

Every song tells a story.

She's a star on the rise, singing about the hard life behind her.

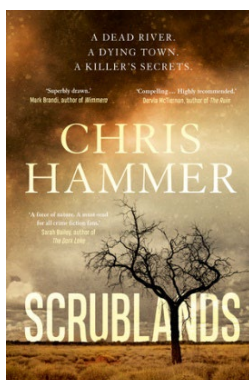
She's also on the run. *Find a future, lose a past.*

Nashville is where she's come to claim her destiny. It's also where the darkness she's fled might find her. And destroy her.

Run, Rose, Run is a novel glittering with danger and desire—a story that only America's #1 most beloved entertainer and its #1 bestselling author could have created.

Themes: Rags-to-riches, the music industry, Nashville, country music

Want to read



Scrublands - Chris Hammer

Thriller

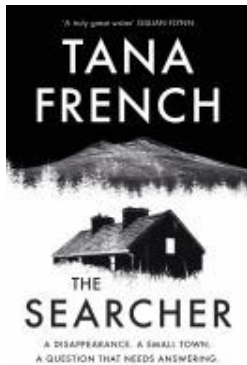
(496 pages) (MP3, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

In Riversend, an isolated Australian community afflicted by an endless drought, a young priest does the unthinkable: he kills five parishioners before being taken down himself. A year later, journalist Martin Scarsden arrives in Riversend. His assignment: to report how the townspeople are coping as the anniversary of the tragedy approaches. But as Martin meets the locals and hears their version of events, he begins to realize that the accepted explanation—a theory established through an award-winning investigation by Martin's own newspaper—may be wrong.

Just as Martin believes he's making headway, a shocking new crime rocks the town. As the national media flock to the scene, Martin finds himself thrown into a whole new mystery. What was the real reason behind the priest's shooting spree? And how does it connect to other deaths in the district, if at all? Martin struggles to uncover the town's dark secrets, putting his job, his mental state, and his very life at risk.

Themes: Drought, mass murder, media and truth

Want to read



The Searcher - Tana French

Crime Fiction

(451 pages) [\(e-Book and e-Audiobook available\)](#)

A disappearance. A small town. A question that needs answering...

Retired detective Cal Hooper moves to a remote village in rural Ireland. His plans are to fix up the dilapidated cottage he's bought, to walk the mountains, to put his old police instincts to bed forever.

Then a local boy appeals to him for help. His brother is missing, and no one in the village, least of all the police, seems to care. And once again, Cal feels that restless itch.

Something is wrong in this community, and he must find out what, even if it brings trouble to his door.

Themes: Crime, mystery, thriller, rural Ireland

[Want to read](#)



The Second Son - Loraine Peck

Crime Fiction

(464 pages) [\(e-Book and e-Audiobook available\)](#)

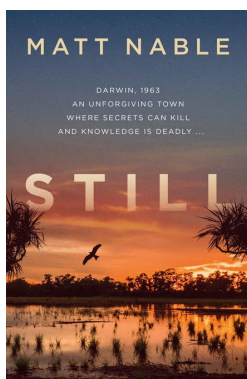
Duty always has a price. When Ivan Novak is shot dead putting out his garbage bins in Sydney's west, his family wants revenge, especially his father Milan, a notorious crime boss. It's a job for the second son, Ivan's younger brother Johnny.

But Johnny loves his wife Amy and their son Sasha. And she's about to deliver her ultimatum: either the three of them escape this wave of killing or she'll leave, taking Sasha. Torn between loyalty to his family and love for his wife, Johnny plans the heist of a lifetime and takes a huge risk. Is he prepared to pay the price? And what choice will Amy make?

The Second Son is a brilliant action-packed crime debut that creates a world where honour is everything, violence is its own language, and love means breaking all the rules.

Themes: Australian fiction, thriller, crime, crime families, Croatian-Australian culture

[Want to read](#)



Still - Matt Nable

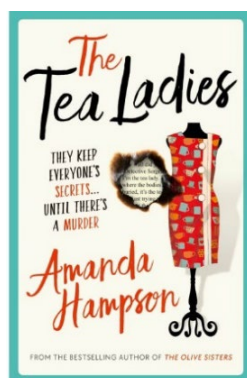
Crime/Thriller

(384 pages) [\(e-Audiobook available\)](#)

Darwin, Summer, 1963. The humidity sat heavy and thick over the town as Senior Constable Ned Potter looked down at a body that had been dragged from the shallow marshland. He didn't need a coroner to tell him this was a bad death. He didn't know then that this was only the first. Or that he was about to risk everything looking for answers. Late one night, Charlotte Clark drove the long way home, thinking about how stuck she felt, a 23-year-old housewife, married to a cowboy who wasn't who she thought he was. The days ahead felt suffocating, living in a town where she was supposed to keep herself nice and wait for her husband to get home from the pub. Charlotte stopped the car, stepped out to breathe in the night air and looked out over the water to the tangled mangroves. She never heard a sound before the hand was around her mouth. Both Charlotte and Ned are about to learn that the world they live in is full of secrets and that it takes courage to fight for what is right. But there are people who will do anything to protect themselves and sometimes courage is not enough to keep you safe.

Themes: Northern Territory, historical, suspense

[Want to read](#)



The Tea Ladies - Amanda Hampson

Cosy Crime Fiction

(384 pages) [\(e-Book available\)](#)

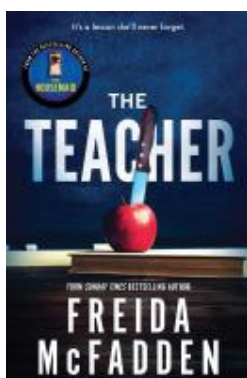
Sydney, 1965: After a chance encounter with a stranger, tea ladies Hazel, Betty and Irene become accidental sleuths, stumbling into a world of ruthless crooks and racketeers in search of a young woman believed to be in danger.

In the meantime, Hazel's job at Empire Fashionwear is in jeopardy. The firm has turned out the same frocks and blouses for the past twenty years and when the mini-skirt bursts onto the scene, it rocks the rag trade to its foundations. War breaks out between departments, and it falls to Hazel, the quiet diplomat, to broker peace and save the firm.

When there is a murder in the building, the tea ladies draw on their wider network and put themselves in danger as they piece together clues that connect the murder to a nearby arson and a kidnapping. But if there's one thing tea ladies can handle, it's hot water.

Themes: cosy crime, historical fiction, fashion, mystery

[Want to read](#)



The Teacher - Freida McFadden

Thriller

(393 pages) [\(e-Audiobook available\)](#)

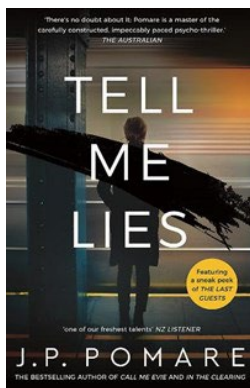
Lesson #1: Trust no one. Eve has a good life. She wakes up each day, kisses her husband Nate, and heads off to teach math at the local high school. All is as it should be. Except...

Last year, Caseham High was rocked by a scandal involving a student-teacher affair, with one student, Addie, at its center. But Eve knows there is far more to these ugly rumors than meets the eye.

Addie can't be trusted. She lies. She hurts people. She destroys lives. At least, that's what everyone says. But nobody knows the real Addie. Nobody knows the secrets that could destroy her. And Addie will do anything to keep it quiet...

Themes: Cheating and affairs, contemporary, narcissists, child abuse

[Want to read](#)



Tell Me Lies - JP Pomare

Thriller

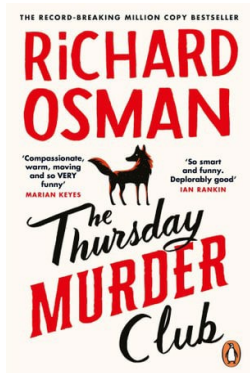
(257 pages) (MP3 available)

Margot's clients all lie to her, but one lie could cost her family and freedom.

Psychologist Margot Scott has a picture-perfect life: a nice house in the suburbs, a husband, two children, and a successful career. On a warm spring morning, Margot spots one of her clients on a busy train platform. He is looking down at his phone, with his duffel bag in hand as the train approaches. That's when she slams into his back and he falls in front of the train. Suddenly, one tragedy leads to another leaving her, her family, and her patients in danger. As misfortune unfolds, listeners will soon question Margot's true role in all of these unfortunate events.

Themes: Murder, psychological thriller, New Zealand

Want to read



The Thursday Murder Club - Richard Osman

Cosy Crime Fiction

(380 pages) (Large Print, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Four unlikely friends. A shocking murder. Welcome to THE THURSDAY MURDER CLUB

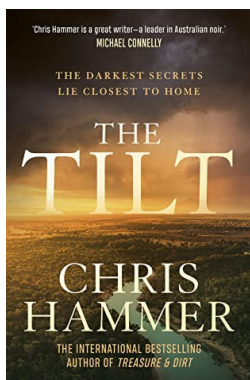
In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet up once a week to investigate unsolved murders. But when a brutal killing takes place on their very doorstep, the Thursday Murder Club find themselves in the middle of their first live case.

Elizabeth, Joyce, Ibrahim and Ron might be pushing eighty but they still have a few tricks up their sleeves.

Can our unorthodox but brilliant gang catch the killer before it's too late?

Themes: Mystery, humour, friendship, aging

Want to read



The Tilt - Chris Hammer

Crime Fiction

(473 pages)

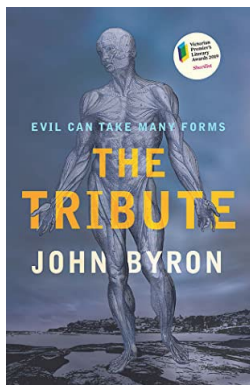
Newly-minted homicide detective Nell Buchanan returns to her home town, annoyed at being assigned a decades-old murder - a 'file and forget'.

But this is no ordinary cold case, as the discovery of more bodies triggers a chain of escalating events in the present day. As Nell starts to join the pieces together, she begins to question how well she truly knows those closest to her. Could her own family be implicated in the crimes?

The nearer Nell comes to uncovering the secrets of the past, the more dangerous the present becomes for her, as she battles shadowy assailants and sinister forces. Can she survive this harrowing investigation and what price will she have to pay for the truth?

Themes: Australian, detectives, murder, cold cases, family secrets

Want to read



The Tribute - John Byron

Crime Fiction

(432 pages) (e-Book available)

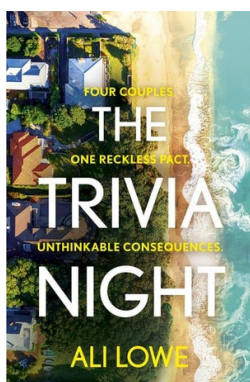
The spate of cold, methodical attacks has the city on edge, but the serial killer may not even be the darkest player in this story.

Desperate for a breakthrough, decorated homicide detective David Murphy draws into the case his art historian sister, Joanna, and his wife, Sylvia. Unravelling the mystery of who is behind the killings pushes each beyond the limits of what they thought possible.

The Tribute is a subversive take on modern masculinity and misogyny told through an irresistible crime narrative. Dark and unpredictable, chilling but sympathetic, it weaves a tapestry of narrative threads towards a mesmerizing climax that will challenge the way you think about everyone you meet. Meticulously researched, hugely ambitious and superbly crafted, *The Tribute* is the most outstanding crime novel of 2021.

Themes: Australian fiction, serial killings, toxic masculinity, Sydney

Want to read



The Trivia Night - Ali Lowe

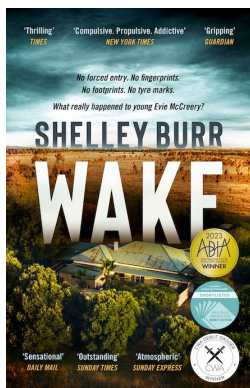
Thriller

(356 pages)

From the outside the parents of the kindergarten class at Darley Heights primary school seem to have it all. Living in the wealthy Sydney suburbs, it's a community where everyone knows each other - and secrets don't stay secret for long. The big date in the calendar is the school's annual fundraising trivia night, but when the evening gets raucously out of hand, talk turns to partner-swapping. Initially scandalised, it's not long before a group of parents make a reckless one-night-only pact. But in the harsh light of day, those involved must face the fallout of their behaviour. As they begin to navigate the shady aftermath of their wild night, the truth threatens to rip their perfect lives apart - and revenge turns fatal.

Themes: Relationships, trust, secrecy

Want to read



Wake - Shelley Burr

Crime Fiction

(368 pages) (e-Audiobook available)

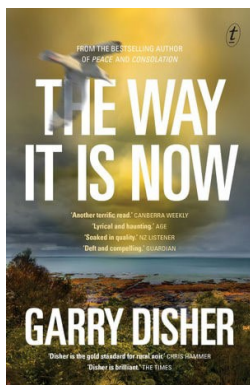
Evelyn simply vanished. The small town of Nannine lies in the harsh red interior of New South Wales. Once a thriving outback centre, this ghost town now has one sinister claim to fame: the still-unsolved disappearance of Evelyn McCreery nineteen years ago from the bedroom she shared with her twin sister.

Mina McCreery's life has been defined by the intense and ongoing public interest in her sister's case. Now a reclusive adult, Mina lives alone on her family's sunbaked, destocked sheep farm. The million-dollar reward her mother established to solve the disappearance has never been paid out.

Enter Lane Holland, a private investigator who dropped out of the police academy to earn a living cracking cold cases. Lane has his eye on the unclaimed money, but he also has darker motivations.

Themes: Australian, suspense, mystery thriller

Want to read



The Way it is Now - Garry Disher

Crime Fiction

(401 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

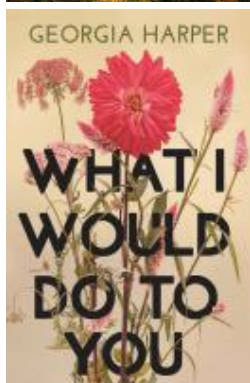
Set in a beach-shack town an hour from Melbourne, *The Way It Is Now* tells the story of a burnt-out cop named Charlie Deravin. Charlie is living in his family's holiday house, on forced leave since he made a mess of things at work.

Things have never been easy for Charlie. Twenty years earlier his mother went missing in the area, believed murdered. His father has always been the main suspect, though her body was never found.

Until now: the foundations are being dug for a new house on a vacant block. The skeletal remains of a child and an adult are found—and Charlie's past comes crashing in on him.

Themes: Small towns, mystery, family

Want to read



What I Would Do to You - Georgia Harper

Crime/Thriller

(325 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

A near-future Australia. The death penalty is back. But if the victim's family wants the perpetrator to die, they have to do it themselves. Twenty-four hours alone in a room with the condemned. No cameras. No microphones. Just whatever punishment they decide befits the crime.

Ten-year-old Lucy was murdered. Through counselling sessions with their court-appointed psychologist, we learn the stories of her family members- Lucy's two mothers - Stella and Matisse - her much older brother and her bookish teenage sister, who is too young to participate in the execution, but who has plans of her own...

Secrets and grief threaten to break the family. As the execution date nears, already-struggling Stella remains adamant that she must carry out the punishment. But it becomes clear that if she steps into that room, the family may lose her too.

Themes: Poetic justice, vigilantes, revenge, families

Want to read



The Woman in the Library - Sulari Gentill

Cosy Crime Fiction

(432 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

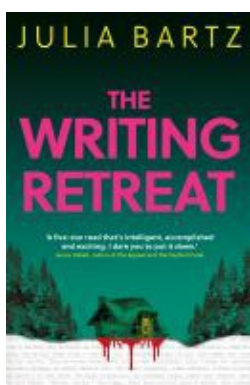
In every person's story, there is something to hide...

The ornate reading room at the Boston Public Library is quiet, until the tranquility is shattered by a woman's terrified scream. Security guards take charge immediately, instructing everyone inside to stay put until the threat is identified and contained. While they wait for the all-clear, four strangers, who'd happened to sit at the same table, pass the time in conversation and friendships are struck. Each has his or her own reasons for being in the reading room that morning—it just happens that one is a murderer.

Award-winning author Sulari Gentill delivers a sharply thrilling read with *The Woman in the Library*, an unexpectedly twisty literary adventure that examines the complicated nature of friendship and shows us that words can be the most treacherous weapons of all.

Themes: Murder, writing, secrecy, obsession

Want to read



The Writing Retreat - Julia Bartz

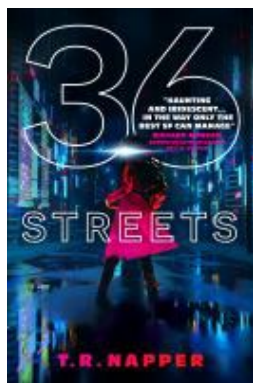
Thriller

(313 pages) (eBook available)

Alex has all but given up on her dreams of becoming a published author when she receives a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: attend an exclusive, month-long writing retreat at the estate of feminist horror writer Roza Vallo. Even the knowledge that Wren, her former best friend and current rival, is attending doesn't dampen her excitement. But when the attendees arrive, Roza drops a bombshell—they must all complete an entire novel from scratch during the next month, and the author of the best one will receive a life-changing seven-figure publishing deal. Determined to win this seemingly impossible contest, Alex buckles down and tries to ignore the strange happenings at the estate, including Roza's erratic behavior, Wren's cruel mind games, and the alleged haunting of the mansion itself. But when one of the writers vanishes during a snowstorm, Alex realizes that something very sinister is afoot. With the clock running out, she must discover the truth—or suffer the same fate.

Themes: Psychological thriller, suspense, LGBTQIA, writing

Want to read



36 Streets - T.R. Napper

Science Fiction Thriller

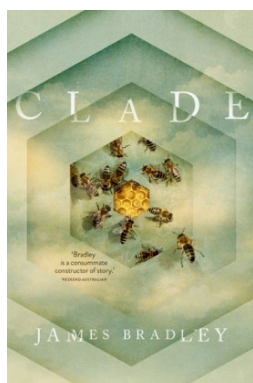
(429 pages)

Lin 'The Silent One' Vu is a gangster and sometime private investigator living in Chinese-occupied Hanoi, in the steaming, paranoid alleyways of the 36 Streets. Born in Vietnam, raised in Australia, everywhere she is an outsider. Through grit and courage Lin has carved a place for herself in the Vietnamese underworld where Hanoi's crime boss, Bao Nguyen, is training her to fight and lead. Bao drives her hard; on the streets there are no second chances.

Meanwhile the people of Hanoi are succumbing to Fat Victory - a dangerously addictive immersive simulation of the US-Vietnam war. When an Englishman comes to Hanoi on the trail of his friend's murderer, Lin's life is turned upside down. She is drawn into the grand conspiracies of the neon gods - of regimes and mega-corporations - as they unleash dangerous new technologies. Lin must confront the immutable moral calculus of unjust wars. She must choose: family, country, or gang. Blood, truth, or redemption. No choice is easy on the 36 Streets.

Themes: Gangsters, organised crime, conspiracies, Australian Science Fiction

Want to read 



Clade - James Bradley

Science Fiction

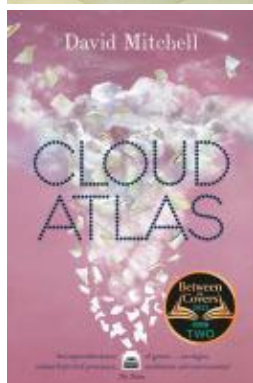
(239 pages) (e-Book available)

On a beach in Antarctica, scientist Adam Leith marks the passage of the summer solstice. Back in Sydney his partner Ellie waits for the results of her latest round of IVF treatment. That result, when it comes, will change both their lives and propel them into a future neither could have predicted. In a collapsing England Adam will battle to survive an apocalyptic storm. Against a backdrop of growing civil unrest at home, Ellie will discover a strange affinity with beekeeping. In the aftermath of a pandemic, a young man finds solace in building virtual recreations of the dead. And new connections will be formed from the most unlikely beginnings.

Clade is the story of one family in a radically changing world, a place of loss and wonder where the extraordinary mingles with the everyday. Haunting, lyrical and unexpectedly hopeful, it is the work of a writer in command of the major themes of our time.

Themes: Climate change, dystopia, relationships

Want to read 



Cloud Atlas - David Mitchell

Science Fiction

(529 pages)

Cloud Atlas begins in 1850 with Adam Ewing, an American notary voyaging from the Chatham Isles to his home in California. Ewing is befriended by a physician, Dr. Goose, who begins to treat him for a rare species of brain parasite. The novel careens, with dazzling virtuosity, to Belgium in 1931, to the West Coast in the 1970s, to an inglorious present-day England, to a Korean superstate of the near future where neocapitalism has run amok, and, finally, to a postapocalyptic Iron Age Hawaii in the last days of history. But the story doesn't end even there. The novel boomerangs back through centuries and space, returning by the same route, in reverse, to its starting point. Along the way, David Mitchell reveals how his disparate characters connect, how their fates intertwine, and how their souls drift across time like clouds across the sky.

Themes: Post-apocalyptic, reincarnation, interconnected stories

Want to read 



Fairy Tale: a novel - Stephen King

Fantasy

(577 pages)

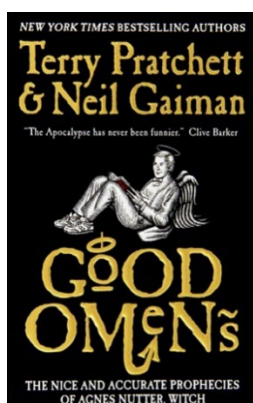
Charlie Reade looks like a regular high school kid, great at baseball and football, a decent student. But he carries a heavy load. His mom was killed in a hit-and-run accident when he was ten, and grief drove his dad to drink. Charlie learned how to take care of himself - and his dad.

Then, when Charlie is seventeen, he meets Howard Bowditch, a recluse with a big dog in a big house at the top of a big hill. In the backyard is a locked shed from which strange sounds emerge, as if some creature is trying to escape.

When Mr. Bowditch dies, he leaves Charlie the house, a massive amount of gold, a cassette tape telling a story that is impossible to believe, and a responsibility far too massive for a boy to shoulder. Because within the shed is a portal to another world - one whose denizens are in peril and whose monstrous leaders may destroy their own world, and ours.

Themes: Urban fantasy, parallel worlds, horror, fairy tales, fathers and sons

Want to read 



Good Omens - Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett

Fantasy

(491 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

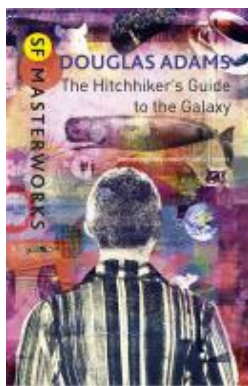
According to The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch (the world's only completely accurate book of prophecies, written in 1655, before she exploded), the world will end on a Saturday. Next Saturday, in fact. Just before dinner.

So, the armies of Good and Evil are amassing, Atlantis is rising, frogs are falling, tempers are flaring. Everything appears to be going according to Divine Plan. Except a somewhat fussy angel and a fast-living demon--both of whom have lived amongst Earth's mortals since The Beginning and have grown rather fond of the lifestyle--are not actually looking forward to the coming Rapture.

And someone seems to have misplaced the Antichrist . . .

Themes: Humour, urban fantasy, supernatural

Want to read 



The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy - Douglas Adams

Science Fiction

(210 pages) (DVD, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

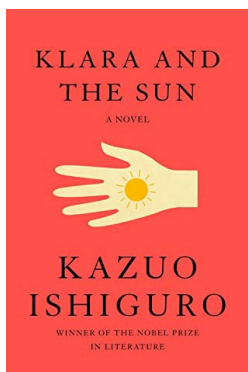


Seconds before the Earth is demolished to make way for a galactic freeway, Arthur Dent is plucked off the planet by his friend Ford Prefect, a researcher for the revised edition of the The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy who, for the last fifteen years, has been posing as an out of work actor.

Together this dynamic pair begin their journey through space aided by quotes from The Hitch Hiker's Guide "A towel is about the most massively useful thing an interstellar hitchhiker can have" and a galaxy-full of fellow travellers: Zaphod Beeblebrox - the two-headed, three-armed ex-hippie and totally out to lunch president of the galaxy; Trillian, Zaphod's girlfriend (formally Tricia McMillan), whom Arthur tried to pick up at a cocktail party once upon a time zone; Marvin, a paranoid, brilliant and chronically depressed robot; Veet Voojagig, a former graduate student who is obsessed with the disappearance of all the ball-point pens he has bought over the years.

Themes: Life on other planets, humour, interstellar travel

Want to read



Klara and the Sun - Kazuo Ishiguro

Science Fiction

(464 pages) (e-Book available)

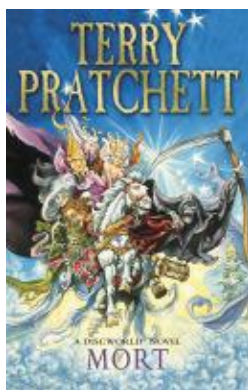


From her place in the store, Klara, an Artificial Friend with outstanding observational qualities, watches carefully the behaviour of those who come in to browse, and of those who pass on the street outside. She remains hopeful that a customer will soon choose her, but when the possibility emerges that her circumstances may change forever, Klara is warned not to invest too much in the promises of humans.

In *Klara and the Sun*, Kazuo Ishiguro looks at our rapidly changing modern world through the eyes of an unforgettable narrator to explore a fundamental question: what does it mean to love?

Themes: 21st Century fiction, science fiction, AI, robots, genetic engineering

Want to read



Mort - Terry Pratchett

Fantasy

(320 pages)

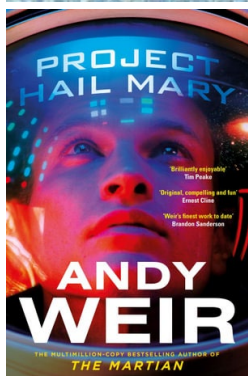
Death comes to us all. When he came to Mort, he offered him a job. Death is the Grim Reaper of the Discworld, a black-robed skeleton carrying a scythe who must collect a minimum number of souls in order to keep the momentum of dying, well... alive.

He is also fond of cats and endlessly baffled by humanity. Soon Death is yearning to experience what humanity really has to offer... but to do that, he'll need to hire some help.

It's an offer Mort can't refuse. As Death's apprentice he'll have free board, use of the company horse - and being dead isn't compulsory. It's a dream job - until Mort falls in love with Death's daughter, Ysabell, and discovers that your boss can be a killer on your love life...

Themes: Fantasy, comedy, Young Adult fiction, wizards

Want to read



Project Hail Mary - Andy Weir

Science fiction

(476 pages) (Large Print and MP3 available)

Ryland Grace is the sole survivor on a desperate, last-chance mission - and if he fails, humanity and the earth itself will perish. Except that right now, he doesn't know that. He can't even remember his own name, let alone the nature of his assignment or how to complete it. All he knows is that he's been asleep for a very, very long time. And he's just been awakened to find himself millions of miles from home, with nothing but two corpses for company.

His crewmates dead, his memories fuzzily returning, Ryland realizes that an impossible task now confronts him. Hurtling through space on this tiny ship, it's up to him to puzzle out an impossible scientific mystery-and conquer an extinction-level threat to our species.

And with the clock ticking down and the nearest human being light-years away, he's got to do it all alone. Or does he?

Themes: Space travel, friendship, aliens, apocalypse

Want to read



Scythe - Neal Shusterman

Dystopian fiction

(435 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



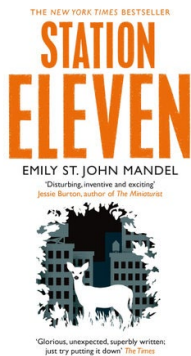
Thou shalt kill.

A world with no hunger, no disease, no war, no misery. Humanity has conquered all those things, and has even conquered death. Now scythes are the only ones who can end life—and they are commanded to do so, in order to keep the size of the population under control.

Citra and Rowan are chosen to apprentice to a scythe—a role that neither wants. These teens must master the “art” of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could mean losing their own.

Themes: YA, fantasy, dystopia

Want to read



Station Eleven - Emily St John Mandel

Science Fiction

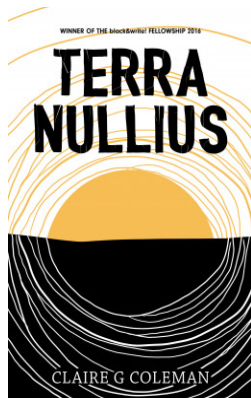
(333 pages)

Set in the days of civilization's collapse, *Station Eleven* tells the story of a Hollywood star, his would-be saviour, and a nomadic group of actors roaming the scattered outposts of the Great Lakes region, risking everything for art and humanity.

One snowy night a famous Hollywood actor slumps over and dies onstage during a production of *King Lear*. Hours later, the world as we know it begins to dissolve. Moving back and forth in time—from the actor's early days as a film star to fifteen years in the future, when a theatre troupe known as the Traveling Symphony roams the wasteland of what remains—this suspenseful, elegiac, spellbinding novel charts the strange twists of fate that connect five people: the actor, the man who tried to save him, the actor's first wife, his oldest friend, and a young actress with the Traveling Symphony, caught in the crosshairs of a dangerous self-proclaimed prophet.

Themes: *Dystopia, fantasy, actors*

[Want to read](#) 



Terra Nullius - Claire Coleman

Science Fiction

(294 pages)

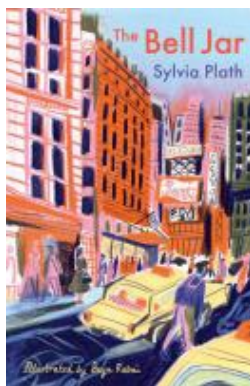
Jacky was running. There was no thought in his head, only an intense drive to run. There was no sense he was getting anywhere, no plan, no destination, no future. All he had was a sense of what was behind, what he was running from. Jacky was running.

The Natives of the Colony are restless. The Settlers are eager to have a nation of peace, and to bring the savages into line. Families are torn apart, re-education is enforced. This rich land will provide for all.

This is not Australia as we know it. This is not the Australia of our history.

Themes: *Indigenous Australians, colonial influence, fantasy*

[Want to read](#) 



The Bell Jar - Sylvia Plath

Autobiographical Fiction

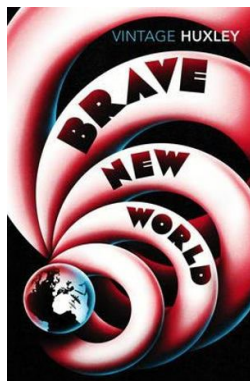
(268 pages) (eBook available)

'I was supposed to be having the time of my life.' When Esther Greenwood wins an internship on a New York fashion magazine in 1953, she is elated, believing she will finally realise her dream to become a writer. But in between the cocktail parties and piles of manuscripts, Esther's life begins to slide out of control. She finds herself spiralling into depression and eventually a suicide attempt, as she grapples with difficult relationships and a society which refuses to take women's aspirations seriously.

The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath's only novel, was originally published in 1963 under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas. The novel is partially based on Plath's own life and has become a modern classic. *The Bell Jar* has been celebrated for its darkly funny and a razor sharp portrait of 1950s society and has sold millions of copies worldwide.

Themes: American literature, feminism, depression, suicide

Want to read



Brave New World - Aldous Huxley

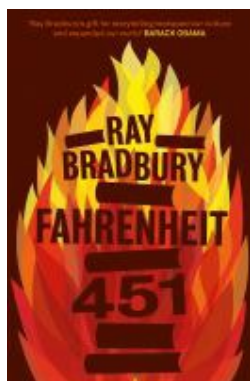
Science Fiction

(244 pages) (DVD and e-Audiobook available)

Brave New World follows a few characters as they live their lives in the seemingly utopian World State metropolis of London. It is a society that rests on consumerism and collectivism and has a rigid caste system. Bernard Marx, a petty and depressive psychiatrist who works for the Hatchery, is sent on a mission to the New Mexico Reservation, where "savages" live. He is accompanied by Lenina Crowne, an attractive fetus technician. On the Reservation, they meet Linda, a former citizen of the World State who had stayed behind, and her son John, born through a "viviparous" procreation, a scandal in the World State. When Bernard and Lenina bring the two back to London, John serves as the mouthpiece for the conflicts between the Reservation, which still abides by traditional values, and the technocracy of the World State.

Themes: Dystopia, totalitarianism, social commentary

Want to read



Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury

Classic Fiction

(230 pages) (e-Audiobook available)

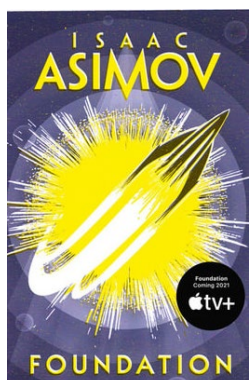
The hauntingly prophetic classic novel set in a not-too-distant future where books are burned by a special task force of firemen. Guy Montag is a fireman. His job is to burn books, which are forbidden, being the source of all discord and unhappiness.

Even so, Montag is unhappy; there is discord in his marriage. Are books hidden in his house? The Mechanical Hound of the Fire Department, armed with a lethal hypodermic, escorted by helicopters, is ready to track down those dissidents who defy society to preserve and read books.

The classic novel of a post-literate future, *Fahrenheit 451* stands alongside Orwell's 1984 and Huxley's *Brave New World* as a prophetic account of Western civilisation's enslavement by the media, drugs and conformity.

Themes: Science fiction, space opera, artificial intelligence

Want to read



Foundation - Isaac Asimov

Classic Fiction

(244 pages) (e-Audiobook available)

For twelve thousand years the Galactic Empire has ruled supreme. Now it is dying. But only Hari Seldon, creator of the revolutionary science of psychohistory, can see into the future -- to a dark age of ignorance, barbarism, and warfare that will last thirty thousand years. To preserve knowledge and save mankind, Seldon gathers the best minds in the Empire -- both scientists and scholars -- and brings them to a bleak planet at the edge of the Galaxy to serve as a beacon of hope for a future generation. He calls his sanctuary the Foundation.

But soon the fledgling Foundation finds itself at the mercy of corrupt warlords rising in the wake of the receding Empire. Mankind's last best hope is faced with an agonizing choice: submit to the barbarians and be overrun -- or fight them and be destroyed.

Themes: Science fiction, space opera, artificial intelligence

Want to read



Frankenstein - Mary Shelley

Classic Fiction

(260) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

Obsessed with creating life itself, Victor Frankenstein plunders graveyards for the material to fashion a new being, which he shocks into life with electricity. But his botched creature, rejected by Frankenstein and denied human companionship, sets out to destroy his maker and all that he holds dear. Mary Shelley's chilling Gothic tale was conceived when she was only eighteen, living with her lover Percy Shelley near Byron's villa on Lake Geneva. It would become the world's most famous work of horror fiction, and remains a devastating exploration of the limits of human creativity.

Themes: Isolation, revenge, nature and creation

Want to read

VINTAGE ATWOOD

The Handmaid's Tale - Margaret Atwood

Classic Fiction

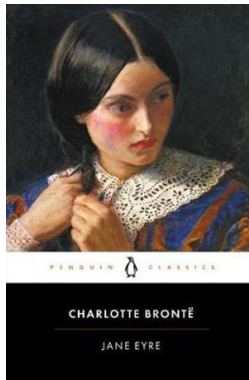
(324 pages) (MP3, Large Print, e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. She may leave the home of the Commander and his wife once a day to walk to food markets whose signs are now pictures instead of words because women are no longer allowed to read. She must lie on her back once a month and pray that the Commander makes her pregnant, because in an age of declining births, Offred and the other Handmaids are valued only if their ovaries are viable. Offred can remember the years before, when she lived and made love with her husband, Luke; when she played with and protected her daughter; when she had a job, money of her own, and access to knowledge. But all of that is gone now...

Themes: Science-fiction, dystopia, feminism

Want to read



Jane Eyre - Charlotte Brontë

Classic Fiction

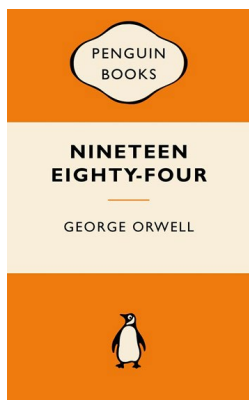
(532 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



Charlotte Brontë's most beloved novel describes the passionate love between the courageous orphan Jane Eyre and the brilliant, brooding, and domineering Rochester. The loneliness and cruelty of Jane's childhood strengthens her natural independence and spirit, which prove invaluable when she takes a position as a governess at Thornfield Hall. But after she falls in love with her sardonic employer, her discovery of his terrible secret forces her to make a heart-wrenching choice. Ever since its publication in 1847, **Jane Eyre** has enthralled every kind of reader, from the most critical and cultivated to the youngest and most unabashedly romantic. It lives as one of the great triumphs of storytelling and as a moving and unforgettable portrayal of a woman's quest for self-respect.

Themes: Love and autonomy, social class, morality

Want to read



Nineteen Eighty-Four - George Orwell

Classic Fiction

(326 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)



"It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen."

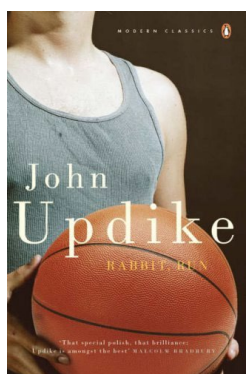
The year is 1984. War and revolution have left the world unrecognisable. Great Britain, now known as Airstrip One, is ruled by the Party, led by Big Brother. Mass surveillance is everything and The Thought Police ensure no individual thinking is allowed.

Winston Smith works at The Ministry of Truth, carefully rewriting history. But Winston dreams of freedom, and of rebellion. It is here that he falls in love with Julia, and starts a secret, forbidden affair with her - but in this world nothing can be kept secret, and they are forced to face consequences more terrifying than either of them could have ever imagined.

A dystopian masterpiece, this is the powerful and prophetic novel that defined the twentieth century.

Themes: Oppression, totalitarianism, eavesdropping, political activists

Want to read



Rabbit, Run - John Updike

Classic Fiction

(280pages) (e-Book available)

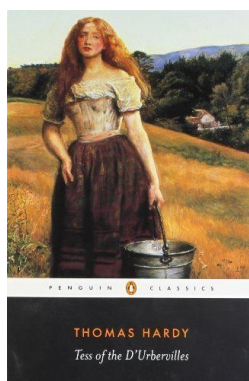


Rabbit, Run is the book that established John Updike as one of the major American novelists of his—or any other—generation.

Its hero is Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, a onetime high-school basketball star who on an impulse deserts his wife and son. He is twenty-six years old, a man-child caught in a struggle between instinct and thought, self and society, sexual gratification and family duty—even, in a sense, human hard-heartedness and divine Grace. Though his flight from home traces a zigzag of evasion, he holds to the faith that he is on the right path, an invisible line toward his own salvation as straight as a ruler's edge.

Themes: Faith, love, sex, sports

Want to read



Tess of the D'Urbervilles - Thomas Hardy

Classic Fiction

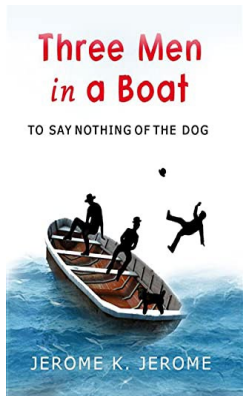
(515 pages) (e-Book available)



When Tess Durbeyfield is driven by family poverty to claim kinship with the wealthy D'Urbervilles and seek a portion of their family fortune, meeting her 'cousin' Alec proves to be her downfall. A very different man, Angel Clare, seems to offer her love and salvation, but Tess must choose whether to reveal her past or remain silent in the hope of a peaceful future. With its sensitive depiction of the wronged Tess and with its powerful criticism of social convention, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is one of the most moving and poetic of Hardy's novels.

Themes: Victorian, Women's roles, justice

Want to read



Three Men in a Boat - Jerome K. Jerome

Classic Fiction

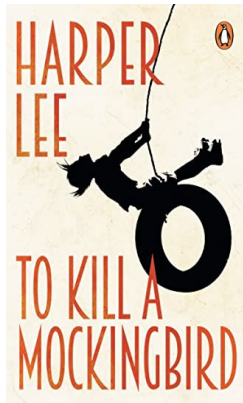
(256 pages)

Three Men in a Boat by Jerome K. Jerome tells the story of three friends and their dog after they decide to take a boating trip along the Thames River. Taking a boat along the river was a popular way to spend a few days at the time, but most people who indulged in the activity probably didn't have as adventurous a time as J, George, Harris, and Montmorency the fox terrier when they came upon the perfect way (at least, it seems like this at the time) to spend their summer holidays.

Suffering from a severe case of overwork, even though each of them avoid the activity as much as possible, they hire a boat and travel along the river between Kingston and Oxford. As they travel along, past picturesque little towns and villages, they marvel at the loveliness of the English countryside in the summer. Their journey is not without incident, however, and it soon becomes clear that these four are as adept at boating as they are at any other type of manual labour, and when the weather takes a turn for the worse they decide that their days of strange food concoctions, poor banjo playing, and swan fighting must come to an end.

Themes: Happiness, travel, country/city life, satire

Want to read 



To Kill a Mockingbird - Harper Lee

Classics

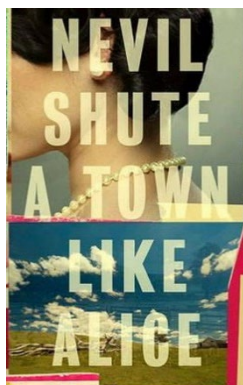
(307 pages) (e-Book and e-Audiobook available)

The unforgettable novel of a childhood in a sleepy Southern town and the crisis of conscience that rocked it. *To Kill A Mockingbird* became both an instant bestseller and a critical success when it was first published in 1960. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award-winning film, also a classic.

Compassionate, dramatic, and deeply moving, *To Kill A Mockingbird* takes readers to the roots of human behaviour - to innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty, love and hatred, humour and pathos. Now with over 18 million copies in print and translated into forty languages, this regional story by a young Alabama woman claims universal appeal. Harper Lee always considered her book to be a simple love story. Today it is regarded as a masterpiece of American literature.

Themes: Race relations, coming of age, American history

Want to read 



A Town Like Alice - Nevil Shute

Classics

(368 pages) (e-Book available)

Jean Paget, a young Englishwoman living in Malaya, is captured by the invading Japanese and forced on a brutal seven-month death march with dozens of other women and children. A few years after the war, Jean is back in England, the nightmare behind her. However, an unexpected inheritance inspires her to return to Malaya to give something back to the villagers who saved her life. Jean's travels leads her to a desolate Australian outpost called Willstown, where she finds a challenge that will draw on all the resourcefulness and spirit that carried her through her war-time ordeals.

Themes: Historical fiction, Australian, romance

Want to read 

QUICK READS (under 200 pages)

A Room of One's Own - Virginia Woolf

Non-Fiction

(144 pages)

Virginia Woolf
A Room of One's Own



A Room of One's Own is an extended essay by Virginia Woolf. First published on the 24th of October, 1929, the essay was based on a series of lectures she delivered at Newnham College and Girton College, two women's colleges at Cambridge University in October 1928. While this extended essay in fact employs a fictional narrator and narrative to explore women both as writers and characters in fiction, the manuscript for the delivery of the series of lectures, titled *Women and Fiction*, and hence the essay, are considered nonfiction. The essay is seen as a feminist text, and is noted in its argument for both a literal and figural space for women writers within a literary tradition dominated by patriarchy.

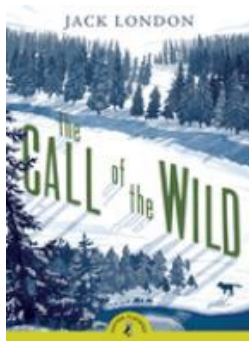
Themes: Feminism, philosophy, essays

Want to read

The Call of the Wild - Jack London

Classic Fiction

(172 pages) (Large Print and DVD available)



First published in 1903, *The Call of the Wild* is regarded as Jack London's masterpiece. Based on London's experiences as a gold prospector in the Canadian wilderness and his ideas about nature and the struggle for existence.

In the harsh and unforgiving wilderness of the Yukon, a domesticated dog named Buck is thrust into a life of survival and adventure. As he is torn from his comfortable home and sold into the brutal world of sled dogs, Buck must rely on his primal instincts to navigate the treacherous terrain and assert his dominance. Through trials and tribulations, Buck discovers his true nature and answers the call of the wild, embracing the untamed spirit within. Jack London's timeless classic is a gripping tale of resilience, transformation, and the enduring power of nature.

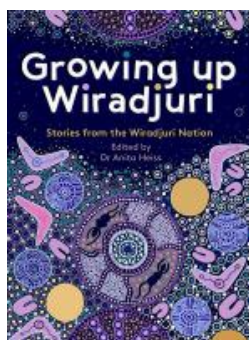
Themes: Adventure, Young Adult, Historical, animals, Canadian wilderness

Want to read

Growing Up Wiradjuri - Ed. Anita Heiss

Biography

(68 pages) (e-Book available)



Featuring stories by Auntie Isabel Reid, Uncle Stan Grant Snr, Auntie Lorraine Tye, Auntie Elaine Lomas, Auntie Cheryl Penrith, Uncle James Ingram, Auntie Mary Atkinson, Uncle Norman Little. *Growing up Wiradjuri* is a collection of personal stories by Wiradjuri Elders. The writers are Uncles and Aunties who came of age in New South Wales in the 1950s and 1960s. In a strong collective voice, they share the difficulties of growing up under the rule of the welfare board. Some describe their experiences of evading capture by the welfare mob, or of being stolen and forced into state care away from their families. Some describe experiencing racism in school, the trials of poverty and family separation. Alongside the difficulties of marginal life, backbreaking labour and family separation, they also detail their fond memories of their own Elders, Aunts and Uncles who cared for them and taught them culture. Every contributor has important advice to share with the next generation. Please note this is a junior non-fiction title, which makes for quick and light reading.

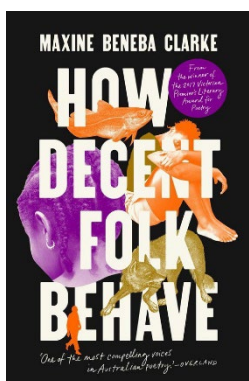
Themes: Indigenous, local stories, racism, community

Want to read

How Decent Folk Behave - Maxine Beneba Clarke

Poetry

(192 pages)



we are all just one small disaster away from sinking, and sometimes you only realise when you're gasping for air On a daylight street in Minneapolis Minnesota, a Black man is asphyxiated - by callous knee of an officer, by cruel might of state, and under crushing weight of colony. In Melbourne the body of another woman has been found - this time, after catching a late tram home. The Atlantic has run out of the English alphabet, when christening hurricanes this season. The earth is on fire - from the redwoods of California, to Australia's east coast. The sea draws back, and tsunamis lash out in Samoa and Sumatra. Water rises in Sulawesi and Nagasaki. Battered cod are surfacing, all along the Murray Darling. The virus arrives, and the virus thrives. Authorities seal the public housing towers up, and truck in one cop to every five residents. Notre Dame is ablaze - the cathedral spire blackened, and teetering. Out in Biloela, the deportation vans have arrived. Every Friday, in cities all across the world, children are walking out of school. The wolves are circling. The wolves are circling.

These poems speak of the world that is and sing for a world that may one day be.

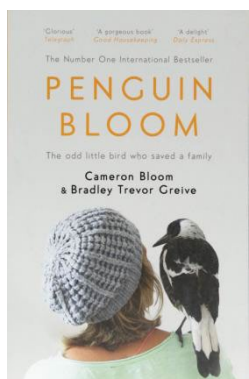
Themes: Social justice, environmental disasters, Australian poetry

Want to read

Penguin Bloom - Cameron Bloom, Bradley Trevor Greive

Non-Fiction

(208 pages) (MP3, DVD and e-Audiobook available)

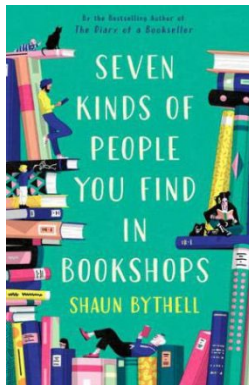


Penguin the Magpie is a global social media sensation. People the world over have fallen in love with the stunning and deeply personal images of this rescued bird and her human family. But there is far more to Penguin's story than meets the eye. It begins with a shocking accident, in which Cameron's wife, Sam, suffers a near fatal fall that leaves her paralysed and deeply depressed.

Into their lives comes Penguin, an injured magpie chick abandoned after she fell from her nest. Penguin's rescue and the incredible joy and strength she gives Sam and all those who helped her survive demonstrates that, however bleak things seem, compassion, friendship and support can come from unexpected quarters, ensuring there are always better days ahead. This plucky little magpie reminds us all that, no matter how lost, fragile or damaged we feel, accepting the love of others and loving them in return will help to make us whole. Please note this contains many photos and is a quick read.

Themes: Australian, photography, family trauma, spinal cord injury

Want to read



Seven Kinds of People You Find in Bookshops - Shaun Bythell

Humour

(128 pages)

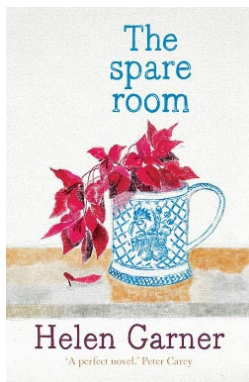
There's the Expert (divided into subspecies from the Bore to the Helpful Person), the Young Family (ranging from the Exhausted to the Aspirational), Occultists (from Conspiracy Theorist to Craft Woman).

Then there's the Loiterer (including the Erotica Browser and the Self-Published Author), the Bearded Pensioner (including the Lycra Clad), and the The Not-So-Silent Traveller (the Whistler, Sniffer, Hummer, Farter, and Tutter). Two bonus sections include Staff and, finally, Perfect Customer—all add up to one of the funniest book about books you'll ever find.

Shaun Bythell (author of *Confessions of a Bookseller*) and his mordantly unique observational eye make this perfect for anyone who loves books and bookshops.

Themes: Humour, bookshops, literature, novella

Want to read ☐



The Spare Room - Helen Garner

Literary Fiction

(175 pages) (e-Audiobook available)

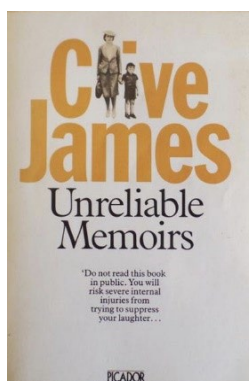
A powerful, witty, and taut novel about a complex friendship between two women, from an internationally acclaimed author.

How much of ourselves must we give up to help a friend in need? Helen has little idea what lies ahead—and what strength she must muster—when she offers her spare room to an old friend, Nicola, who has arrived in the city for cancer treatment.

Skeptical of the medical establishment, and placing all her faith in an alternative health centre, Nicola is determined to find her own way to deal with her illness, regardless of the advice Helen offers. In the weeks that follow, Nicola's battle for survival will turn not only her own life upside down but also those of everyone around her. *The Spare Room* is a magical gem of a book—gripping, moving, and unexpectedly funny—that packs a huge punch, charting a friendship as it is tested by the threat of death.

Themes: Australian fiction, female friendships, death

Want to read ☐



Unreliable Memoirs - Clive James

Memoir

(175 pages)

The first volume of Clive James's autobiography. 'I was born in 1939. The other big event of that year was the outbreak of the Second World War, but for the moment, that did not affect me.'

In the first instalment of Clive James's memoirs, we meet the young Clive, dressed in short trousers, and wrestling with the demands of school, various relatives and the occasional snake, in the suburbs of post-war Sydney. His adventures are hilarious, his recounting of them even more so, in this - the book that started it all...

Clive James is the author of more than twenty books. As well as three volumes of autobiography, *Unreliable Memoirs*, *Falling Towards England* and *May Week Was In June*, he has published collections of literary criticism, television criticism, verse and travel writing. As a television performer he has appeared regularly for both the BBC and ITV.

Themes: Humour, Australian history and culture

Want to read ☐



Wide Sargasso Sea - Jean Rhys

Classic Fiction

(196 pages)

If Antoinette Cosway, a spirited Creole heiress, could have foreseen the terrible future that awaited her, she would not have married the young Englishman. Initially drawn to her beauty and sensuality, he becomes increasingly frustrated by his inability to reach into her soul. He forces Antoinette to conform to his rigid Victorian ideals, unaware that in taking away her identity he is destroying a part of himself as well as pushing her towards madness. Set against the lush backdrop of 1830s Jamaica, Jean Rhys's powerful, haunting masterpiece was inspired by her fascination with the first Mrs Rochester, the mad wife in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

Themes: Historical fiction, feminism, colonialism, Caribbean

Want to read ☐

MIXED TUBS

Mixed Tubs gives your Book Club the opportunity to read different books from the same series, author, or genre. Each Mixed Tub includes 10 - 14 books, some with at least 10 different titles, other with multiples of a few titles. Please let us know if you have any suggestions for future Mixed Tubs.



Children's Classics

Feeling nostalgic? Relive some tales from your childhood, or discover these delectable treats for the first time! This set includes:

- Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll
- Seven Little Australians by Ethel Turner
- Little Women by Louis May Alcott
- Black Beauty by Anna Sewell
- Heidi by Johanna Spyri
- The Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum
- Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder
- A Little Princess by Frances Hodgson Burnett
- Anne of Green Gables by L.M. Montgomery
- Charlotte's Web by E. B. White
- DVD of Charlotte's Web

Want to read



Jane Austen

Jane Austen's stories of clever women, elusive love, and social mores have struck a chord with millions of fans who consider her work compelling, heart-warming, and essential. Adapted time and again for screen and stage, these enduring classics remain as enjoyable as ever.

This set includes:

- Pride and Prejudice
- Sense and Sensibility
- Persuasion
- Emma
- Mansfield Park
- Northanger Abbey

Want to read



Growing Up in Australia

Featuring some of the most well-known and emerging voices in Australian writing, each book in our Growing Up series captures the diversity of our nation in moving and revelatory ways.

This set includes:

- Growing Up in Country Australia
- Growing Up in Australia
- Growing Up Indigenous in Australia
- Growing Up African in Australia
- Growing Up Queer in Australia
- Growing Up Disabled in Australia
- Growing Up Asian in Australia

Want to read



Stephen King Classics

Searching for a thrill, uncover the secrets of the horror master, Stephen King in the spookiest Book Club Kit on offer.

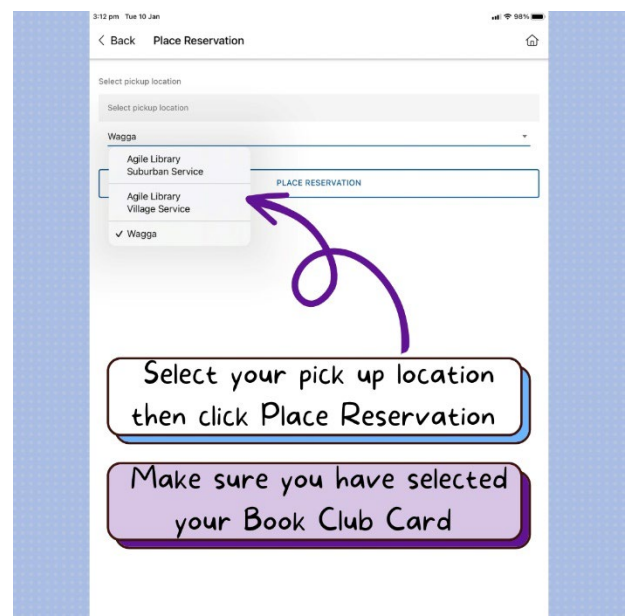
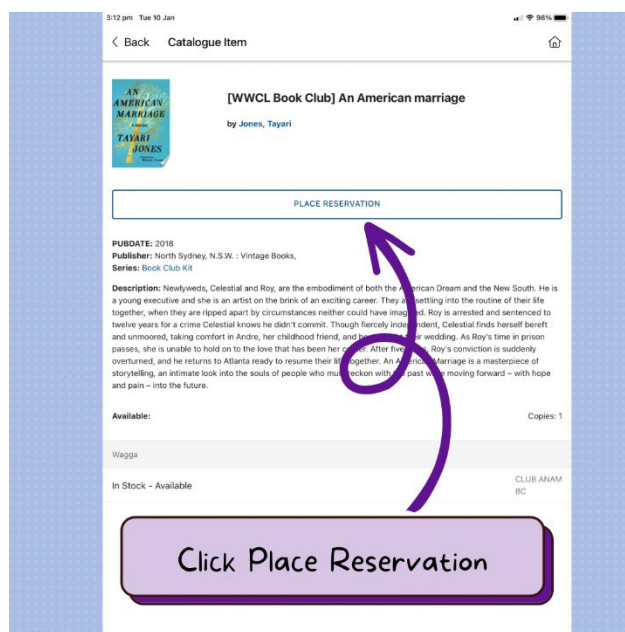
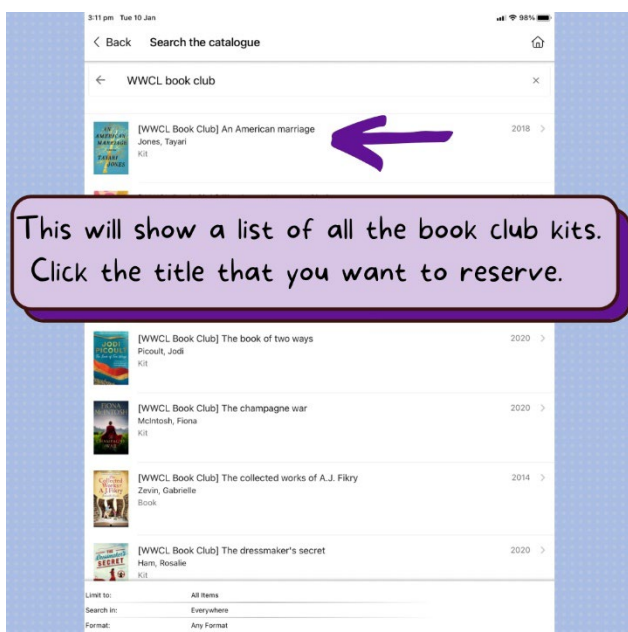
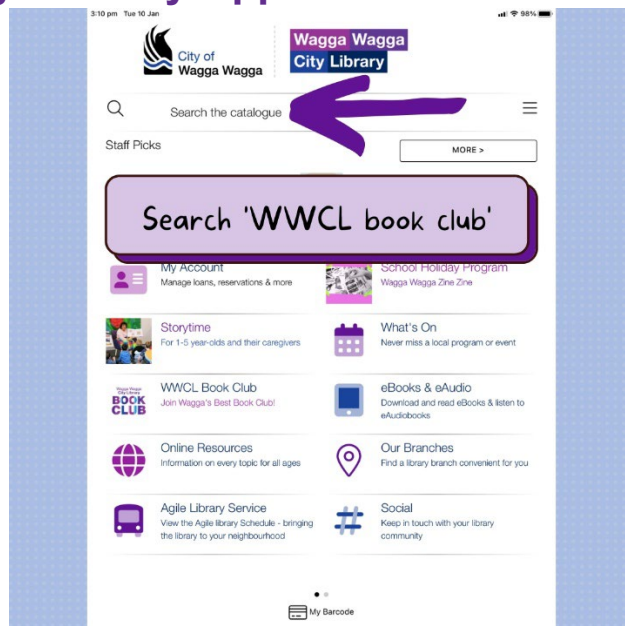
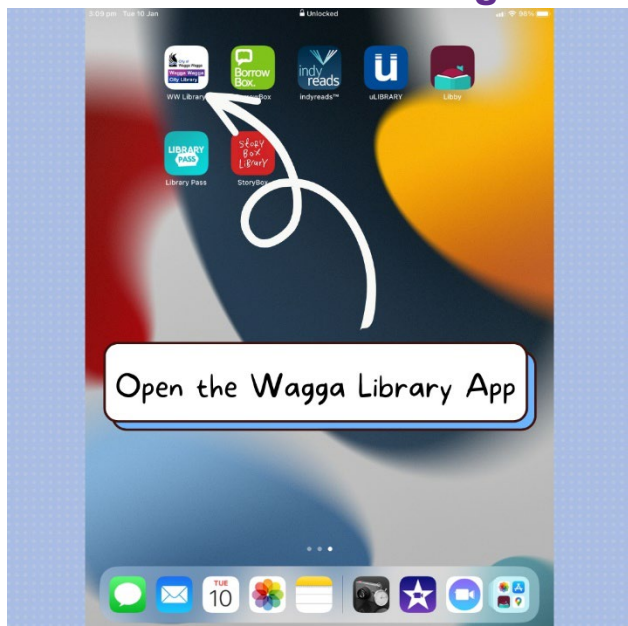
This set includes:

- Misery
- The Shining
- Carrie
- The Body
- The Mist
- Christine
- Cujo
- 2 DVDs: Misery and The Shining.

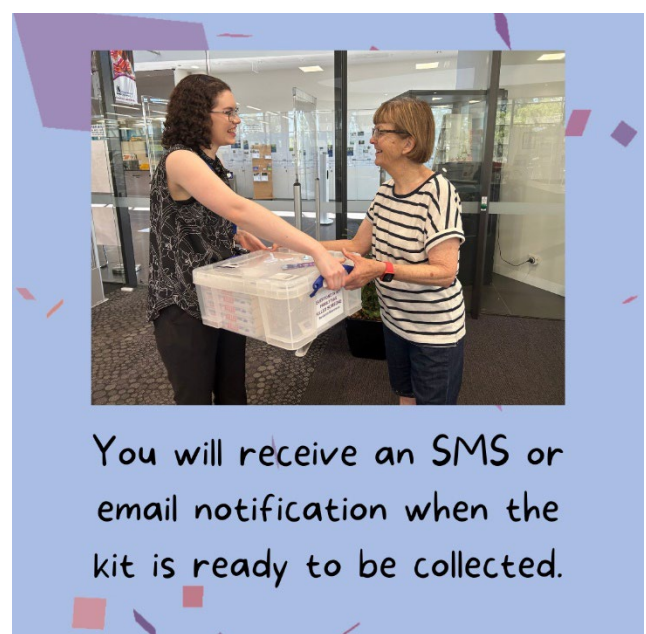
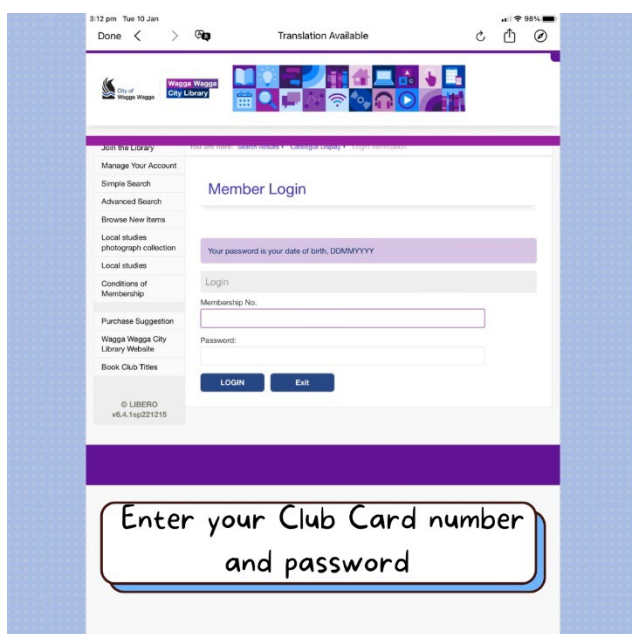
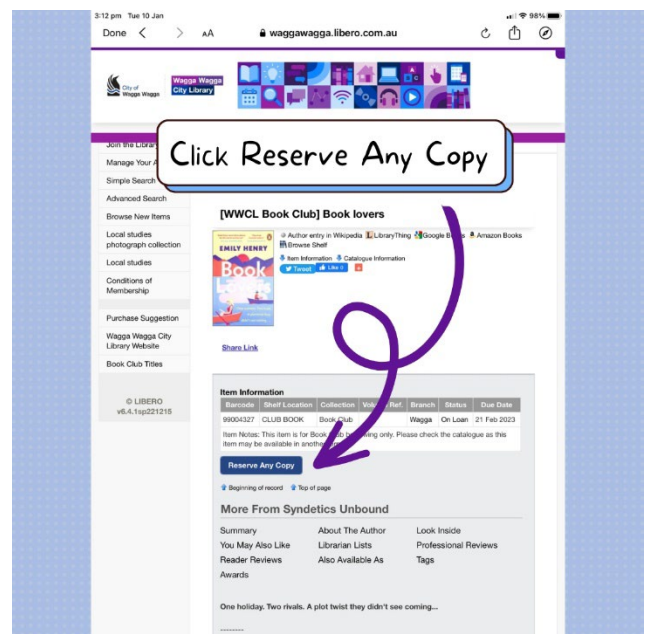
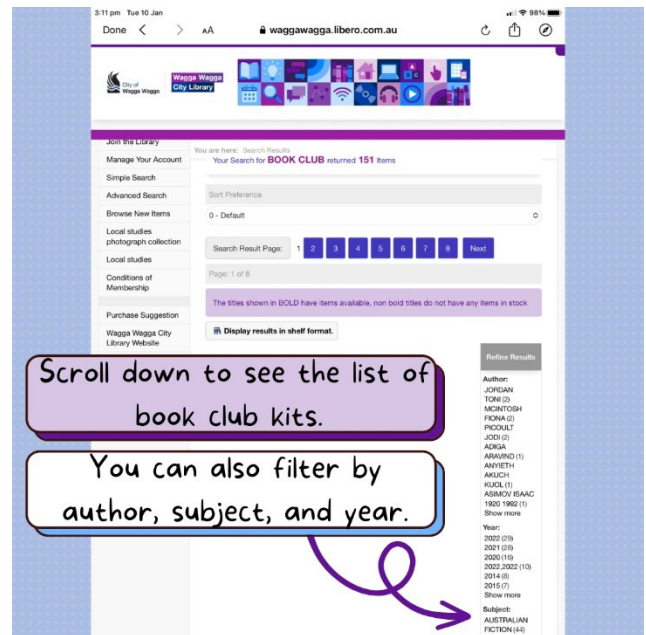
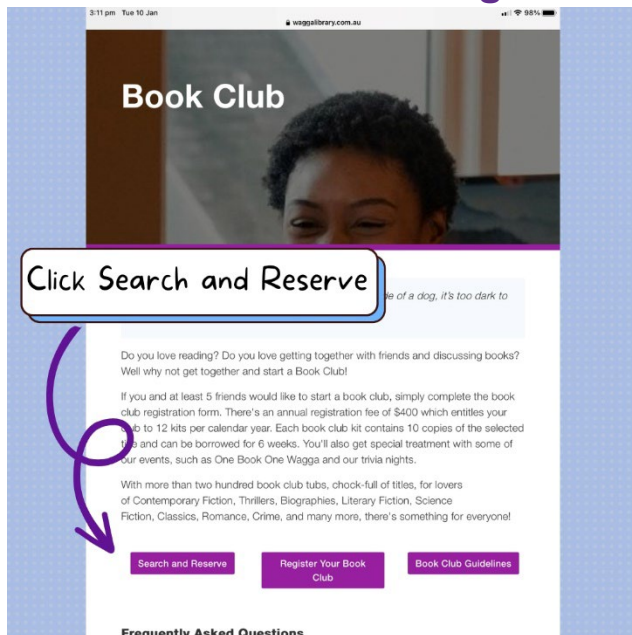
Want to read



How to reserve a kit using the Wagga Library App



How to reserve a kit using the website



Keep track of the NEW 2025 Titles

Each month we add three new titles to our Book Club collection.

January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

Book Club Wishlist

This list is to stay with the Club Leader. It is the club leader's responsibility to reserve items if the club would like specific titles. Wagga City Library staff are happy to help with this process, but we are unable to accept a Wishlist for the entire year. Clubs can have up to 4 items on reserve at a time and staff can help select titles if you are still in a reservation queue.

1.		13.	
2.		14.	
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4.		16.	
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9.		21.	
10.		22.	
11.		23.	
12.		24.	